



Inside

**NICK BOCKWINKEL:
"I'LL GET THE BELT BACK"**

Wrestling

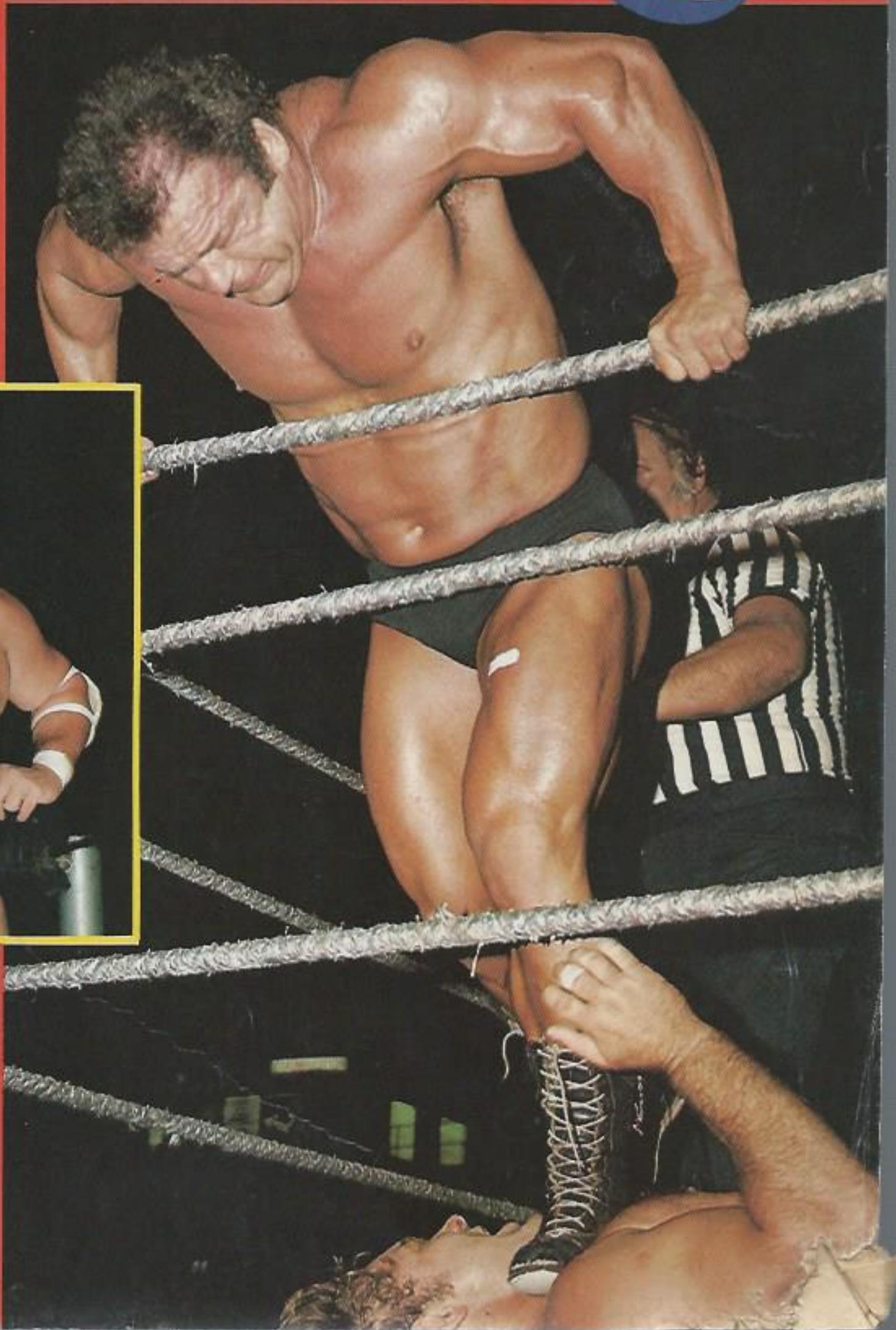
November 1980
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Zbyszko vs. Putski:

**FROM
BROTHERLY
LOVE
TO BRUTAL
HATRED**



**DUSTY RHODES:
THE MAN WHO
CANNOT BE
CHAMPION**



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Peter
King

Editor-in-Chief

The blood trickling down Bruno Sammartino's face was a mark of honor. He knew it would not be easy to defeat Larry Zbyszko. He knew it could mean the end of his career. But Bruno Sammartino was unbeatable this night. Neither Larry Zbyszko nor an army of Larry Zbyszkos could stop him.

And the crowd howled its approval. Forty thousand throats fueled by 80,000 lungs screamed and cajoled Bruno to his greatest victory ever. When it was over, Sammartino's hand was raised. But the triumph belonged to everyone.

"I had to teach him a lesson," an exhausted Sammartino told me later in the Shea Stadium dressing room. "This was to be an example for everyone. Treachery can only succeed for a short time. In the long run, the Judases of this world pay dearly for their sins."

The door to Zbyszko's dressing room was locked for more than 25 minutes after the match ended. When he opened the door, Zbyszko was showered, dressed, and surprisingly calm.

"So, he won. Tonight. Big deal. How many more victories has he got left? You watch. He's finished. He's on the downslide. Geez, I know I took a lot out of him tonight. He'll never be the same."

Zbyszko's words were delivered slowly and deliberately. He claimed no alibis, offered no excuses, looked for no scapegoats. Except one.

"You guys wanna know why I lost," he said, his voice beginning to rise in volume and intensity. "The reason is that SOB Tony Garea. How could I concentrate on Bruno when I'm busy thinking how I'm gonna destroy Garea."

Why does Zbyszko want to destroy Garea? "He's a traitor," Zbyszko said innocently. The dressing room shook in silent amazement.

'TOP SECRET'

Behind the Dressing Room Door by Stu Saks



THE ARROGANCE and cockiness that Nick Bockwinkel usually displays in the ring before a match, along with his AWA championship belt, were not there. The AWA champion had a sickly, worried look in his eyes.

Nick Bockwinkel can rant and rave all he wants about how Verne Gagne allegedly choked the title away from him, but he knows it's not true, and every fan should know the same.

The man who sat in Nick Bockwinkel's dressing room in Chicago's Comiskey Park two hours before the historic bout was not Nick Bockwinkel. Or at least not the Nick Bockwinkel we have all come to know over the years. There was no pre-bout predictions, no boasts. He just went about his stretching routine slowly, mindlessly, and sat down on a bench, head slumped, back arched. "I don't like wrestling outdoors," he mumbled.

Though he was unusually subdued, he did not appear to be ill. To me, he look frightened. And I'm sure Bobby Heenan sensed the same thing because the manager made a big fuss and had all the press removed from the dressing room.

While the press was gone, the champion made a startling statement, which was passed on to me and confirmed by more than one source. It was less than one hour before match time. Heenan and Bockwinkel talked privately for a half hour in the champion's dressing room. Finally, Nick stormed through the door, slammed it shut, took a few steps, and then returned to the room to shout the startling

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ON THE ROAD

with

GARY MORGESTEIN

MADISON
SQUARE GARDEN
NEW YORK CITY

MAPLE LEAF GAE
TORONTO

MINNEAPOLIS
AUDITORIUM
MINNEAPOLIS
THE SCOPE
NORFOLK

THE SUPERDOME
NEW ORLEANS

MID-SOUTH
COLISEUM
MEMPHIS

THE SPECTRUM
PHILADELPHIA

THE OLYMPIA
LOS ANGELES

THE KIEL
ST. LOUIS

COBO HALL
DETROIT

THE SUMMIT
HOUSTON

THE OMNI
ATLANTA

MIAMI BEACH
AUDITORIUM
MIAMI

(In last month's column, Gary Morgenstien was lured to a warehouse by a man posing as Bugsy McGraw. In that warehouse, Morgy saw McGraw tied up and surrounded by Sir Oliver Humperdink and his fiendish band of roguish wrestlers.)

DON MURACO STEPPED behind an empty vat of pickles, folded his arms, and laughed. Bad Bad Leroy Brown straightened his folds of fat and clamped a meaty paw on my right shoulder, stiffening me. Ivan Koloff paced before the bound and gagged Bugsy McGraw. And Sir Oliver Humperdink moved his squat, fat body before me, glowering.

"Scared, Morgy?" Humperdink smirked.

"No," I said, trembling and wishing I'd stayed in law school.

"You're the famous inquisitive writer, risking life and death to get to the truth, well, here's the truth, four-eyes," Humperdink said, gesturing toward McGraw. Bugsy tensed, strained and tried to free himself, instead tipping the chair over and rolling around on the dirty floor.

"You got a lot of nerve," I snapped.

"What you say, boy?" Brown squeezed my shoulder, causing enough pain for all my dead ancestors to float before my eyes.

"I got nerve?" shrieked Humperdink. "You print those foul lies and I got nerve? You got nerves, Morgy, and we're gonna take care of you."

Muraco and Koloff angled toward me. I tried to imagine what Batman would do, realized my cape was in the cleaners, and I could only hope it didn't hurt too much.

"You must be wonderin' why we went through all this just to convince you to come down here," said Humperdink.

"Deceiving and almost kidnapping me isn't convincing," I

retorted. "Besides, I won't listen to anything until you release him," I pointed at McGraw, squirming and moaning on the floor. Humperdink nodded and Koloff released McGraw. Instantly, Bugsy lunged at Koloff and they grappled on the ground until Muraco and Brown parted the two men.

"I'll get you, Humperdink," shouted McGraw, held by Brown. The rotund manager merely chuckled.



Sir Oliver Humperdink went to extreme measures to get Associate Editor Gary Morgenstien to hear his complaints about the press.

"Morgy, I want to talk to you," Humperdink took my elbow and led me off to the side. We sat on cartons of pickled herring. "You think I'm a real creep, don't you?" I nodded and Humperdink reddened. "Well, I'm not, just that my side of things is never printed. You ever write anything nice about me?"

"Nothing to write," I snapped.

"Hah, see that's the sort of biased reporting I get from you guys. I'm a wonderful person, really."

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Body Slams & Pinfalls

By Dan Shocket

IT ISN'T EASY to shock me. I've seen many of the most brutal matches in wrestling history. I'm not the kind of guy who screams bloody murder when someone goes a little out of bounds. Recently, however, I was shocked.

There is shame on the heads of Kevin Sullivan and Stan Hansen, two thugs whom the fans adore. With the courage of goons, they waltzed onto a television interview carrying baseball bats. My first thought, that they'd taken up a sport at which they might be competent, was quickly dispelled. They brandished these weapons recklessly.

"Get the Assassins over here!" Hansen screamed, his courage coming from 40 ounces of hard wood. "We want the Assassins!"

Sullivan equalled his partner's brilliant dialogue and sportsmanlike behavior. The fans, instead of being disgusted by this raw brutality, cheered. The fans cheered! Animals in a pack have more sense.

There is no excuse for carrying baseball bats as weapons. It's against the

law. Sullivan and Hansen are guilty of assault. (Threatening violence is legally assault.) They should be put behind bars like any other common criminals. Is this their way to show they're tough. Armed goons aren't tough. They're despicable bullies.

If they really aren't afraid of the Assassins, why must they carry baseball bats? To me, it seems like an act of cowardice. If they really weren't afraid of the Assassins, Sullivan and Hansen would face the tag team champs unarmed. They'll lose 10 out of 10 times, of course, but at least they'd lose like men. By carrying the baseball bats into the interview area, they lost all hope of ever earning any respect.

For those who have followed Sullivan's career, it comes as no surprise. Kevin is a punk who long ago realized he had no skill or guts. His only talent was toadying to the fans. At the art of groveling, few are better than Sullivan. He's been smart enough not to challenge good wrestlers too often, building a career

on fans' sympathy for his incompetence.

He was too inoffensive to consider seriously, like somebody's retarded kid brother. Then, like a kid brother who longs to be a bully, he got Stan Hansen as a partner. Giddy from the knowledge Hansen will wage his battles for him, Sullivan struts how he imagined a man might. I'm sure it was his idea to carry the baseball bats, something he remembered from his days terrorizing school children (younger than he was, of course) for their candy.

Hansen should know better. A man doesn't resort to carrying baseball bats. It's sad to see a once great wrestler like Hansen running scared. Of course, fear is a smart thing to have when your partner is Kevin Sullivan. Still, no one forced Hansen to join forces with wrestling's wimp.

At least, the fans can now see what Sullivan and Hansen are really made of. Carrying a baseball bat, threatening opponents, is a

(Continued on page 65)

THE

INSIDER

By STEVEN FARHOOD



SCOOP OF THE MONTH

Andre the Giant almost missed the recent WWF extravaganza at Shea Stadium because he didn't want to miss his favorite television show, "Fantasy Island!"

"You know that show really

turns me on," Andre said after his match against Hulk Hogan. "I never miss it on Saturday nights. I plan my schedule around it. On Saturday, they had to drag me out of my hotel room in New York City to take

me to Shea Stadium. It's the first time I've missed the show in three months."

The reason for Andre's love for the show? The Giant, like you and I, has his own fantasies in life.

"I have plenty of fantasies. A lot of people think that just because I'm Andre the Giant, I have everything I want. It's not true.

"I dream about being a handsome ballet dancer, touring Europe with delicate ballerinas and famous dance companies. I dream about being the leading man in the movies, especially on a Hollywood set, with Lana Turner by my side. And most of all, I dream about being a baseball player. I love baseball. I never got the chance to play it in Europe, but I think if I had the time, I could become a major leaguer. You know, I'm good friends with Tom Seaver, and he told me being a baseball player is fun. I'll bet it's easier than being a professional wrestler.

"I think about pitching against Catfish Hunter in the World Series. It's bases loaded in the ninth inning, and I'm pitching to Sal Bando. The count is three-and-two, and after he fouls off seven pitches, I strike him out, and 50,000 people go wild."

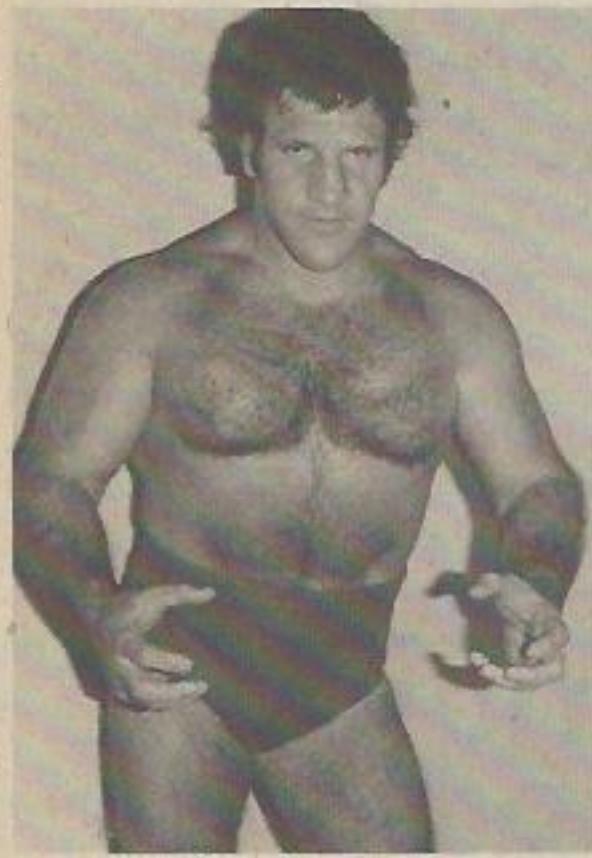
Just imagine: Andre the Giant on TV with Tattoo. Now, that's a fantasy!

(Continued on page 52)

NAMES MAKI

A record crowd of 40,671 fans jammed into New York's Shea Stadium to witness one of the greatest cards in wrestling history. In the main-event BRUNO SAMMARTINO took on LARRY ZBYSZKO in a steel cage match. Bruno emerged victorious, but the feud is far from over.

On the same card, PEDRO MORALES and BOB BACKLUND won the WWF tag team belts from AFA and SIKA, THE



BRUNO SAMMARTINO

SAMOANS. Backlund and Pedro may have to give up the title though, because the WWF rules state that no man may hold more than one title in the Federation (as you know, Backlund is the heavyweight champion of the WWF).

The AWA has had some turmoil in its tag team ranks. JESSE VENTURA and ADRIAN ADONIS were given the belts by default when Verne Gagne failed to keep a commitment to defend the title with MAD DOG VACHON. Verne was defending his single title in Europe and could not get back



GREG VALENTINE

to the States in time for the scheduled match against Ventura and Adonis.

The NWA title is now a dead issue as long as HARLEY RACE has the title, according to DUSTY RHODES. "I promised the people that if I did not win the title from Race at 'The Last Tangle in Tampa,' I would never wrestle him again for the title. I am a man of my word. Harley Race, you will never again get the opportunity to wrestle me as long as you have that belt. It's all over Jack!"

GREG VALENTINE moves into the number one NWA rating position this month following his win over RIC FLAIR for the United States Heavyweight championship. "I told everyone that Flair was easy pickins," boasted Valentine. "Well, I just proved that I was right." Flair contends that he will get the championship back from his ex-friend and see to it that Greg never gets the title again.

RAY CANDY is still smarting from the weapon KILLER KAHN hit him with during their match at

New Orleans' Superdome. "It's bad enough that he boots you with those gigantic feet of his," Candy says, "but when he adds to it with a weapon, that's going too far!"

... TERRY ORNDORFF, brother of PAUL ORNDORFF, is looking great in his southern battles... TERRY GORDY and BUDDY ROBERTS are keeping busy defending their Louisiana tag team belts.

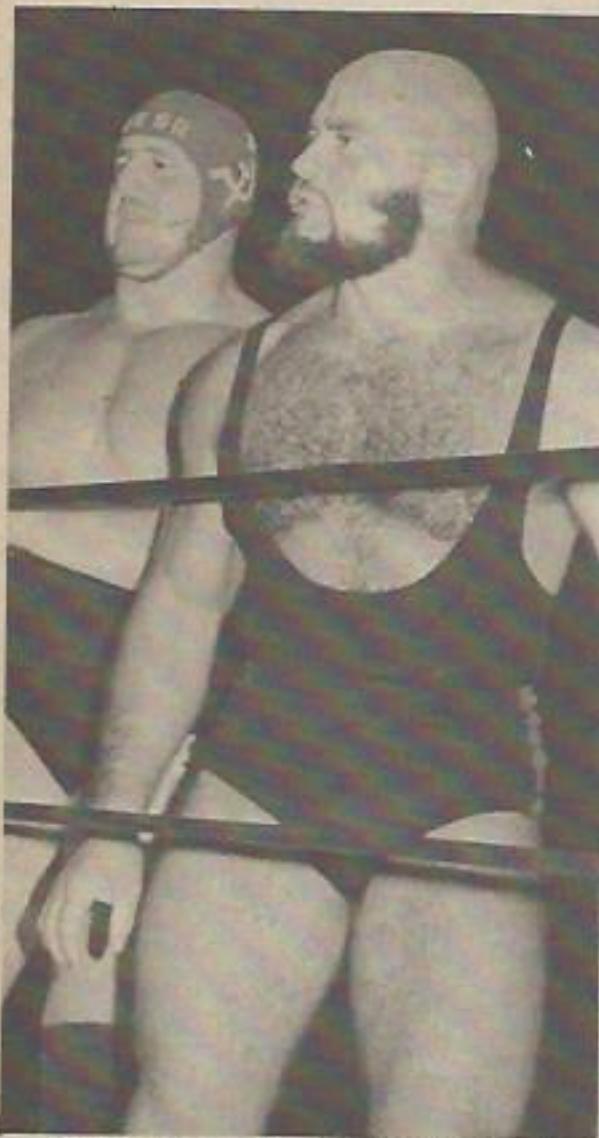
It was billed as "The Battle of the Heart Punch Experts." STAN STASIAK vs. OX BAKER. And when it was all over, only Stasiak stood. Baker contends he still has the best heartpunch. "We're not through with each other yet!" Baker swears... Experts are keeping their eyes on MIKE DAVIS, who was recently named Georgia Rookie of the Year by the Wrestling Fans International Association.



KILLER KAHN

N' NEWS

Bill Apter
reporting...



VOLKOFF & KOLOFF

THE ANDERSON BROTHERS, OLE, GENE, and LARS are at war—with each other! And DUSTY RHODES is the focal point of the dispute. During a tag team match, Ole turned on his partner, Dusty, and was joined in the assault by brother Gene. Into the ring charged brother Lars, presumably to aid in the family project. To the amazement of ringsiders (and to the sheer shock of Rhodes), Lars came into the ring to fight off his brothers. Ole and Gene now have sworn to eliminate their brother from the wrestling scene, even if they have to cripple him to do it!

As this column was about to go to press, we learned that JACK and JERRY BRISCO lost the Florida tag team championship to the team of IVAN KOLOFF and

NIKOLAI VOLKOFF, managed by SIR OLIVER HUMPERDINK. "Russia has the belts now!" Humperdink told us. "It goes to show you that the men I bring from other lands are far superior to the competition they face" . . . Young BARRY WINDHAM has taken the Florida television championship from MR. SAITO . . . DICK SLATER has won a tournament to determine the new Southern champion (Dusty Rhodes relinquished the title several months ago).

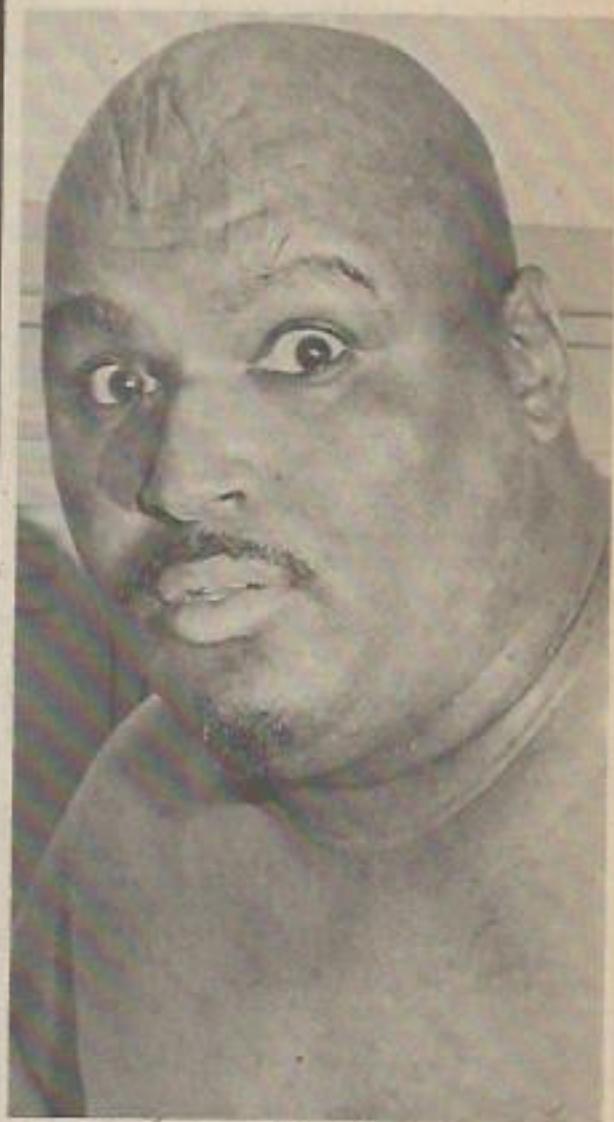
CHAVO GUERRERO would like another chance to wrestle



TATSUMI FUJINAMI

WWF Jr. Heavyweight champion TATSUMI FUJINAMI. Also trying to get his hands on Fujinami is NWA Jr. Heavyweight champion LES THORNTON. "Fujinami has been ducking me for quite some time and it is about time he wrestled me," Thornton said. "I want him now."

In closing my column this issue, I want to discuss an incident that I think I have a right to sound off about. I was photographing the matches at Atlanta's Omni Auditorium a short while ago.



ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER

During the course of the evening, as I was doing my job, I was brutally attacked, for no apparent reason, by ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER. Besides causing me much pain (he headlocked me, knocked me to the floor, and kicked me before I could get away), he also broke a very valuable camera. When I asked his manager, THE GREAT MEPHISTO, for an explanation, he yelled, "nosy reporters get what is coming to them!" And then he left the room. I don't know what he means. I have never said anything that would upset either Abdullah or Mephisto, but I will now. I want them thrown out of wrestling.

Gentlemen, my war—in print—has just begun!

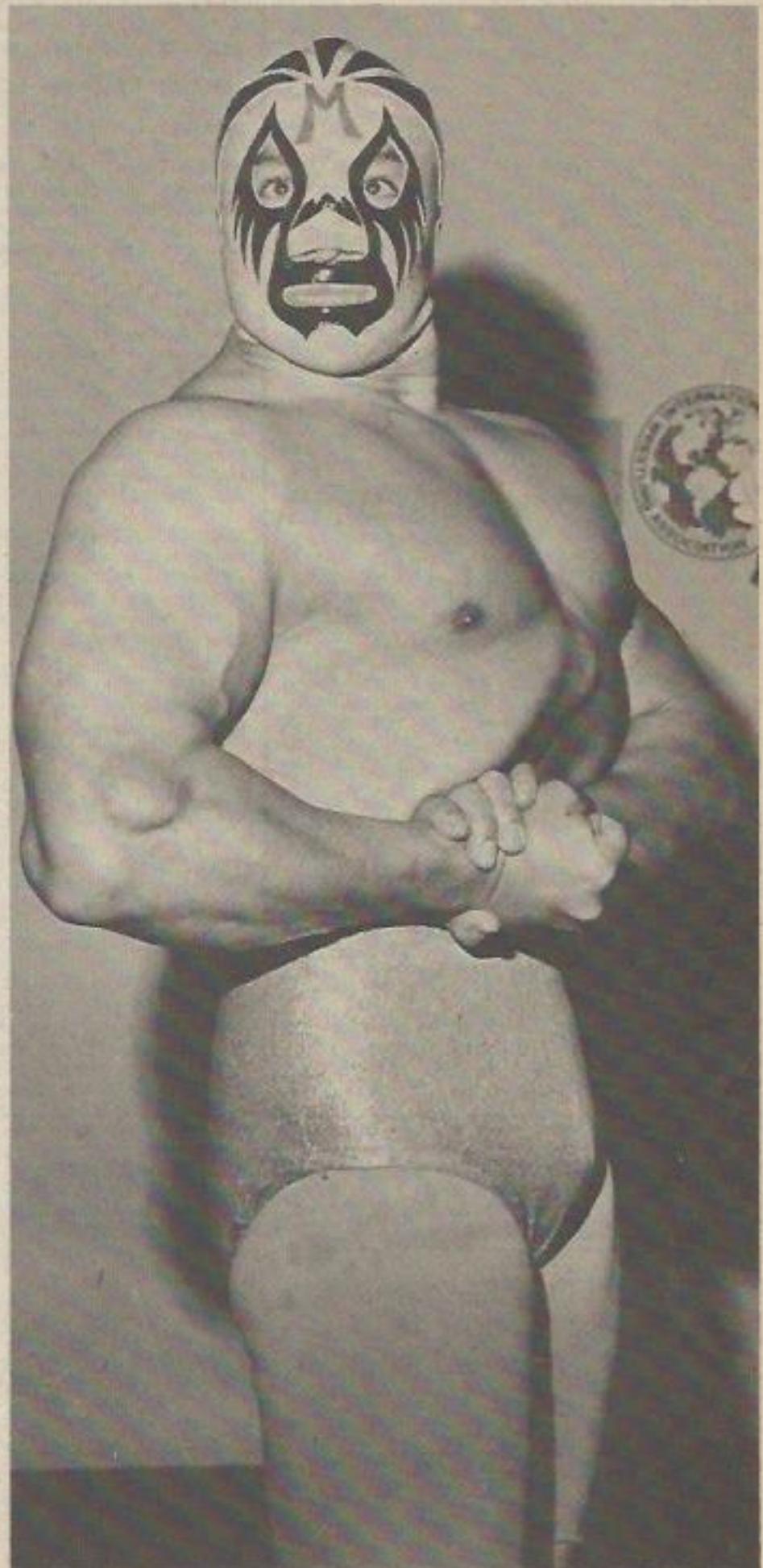
See you all next month!



Matt Brock's PLAIN SPEAKING

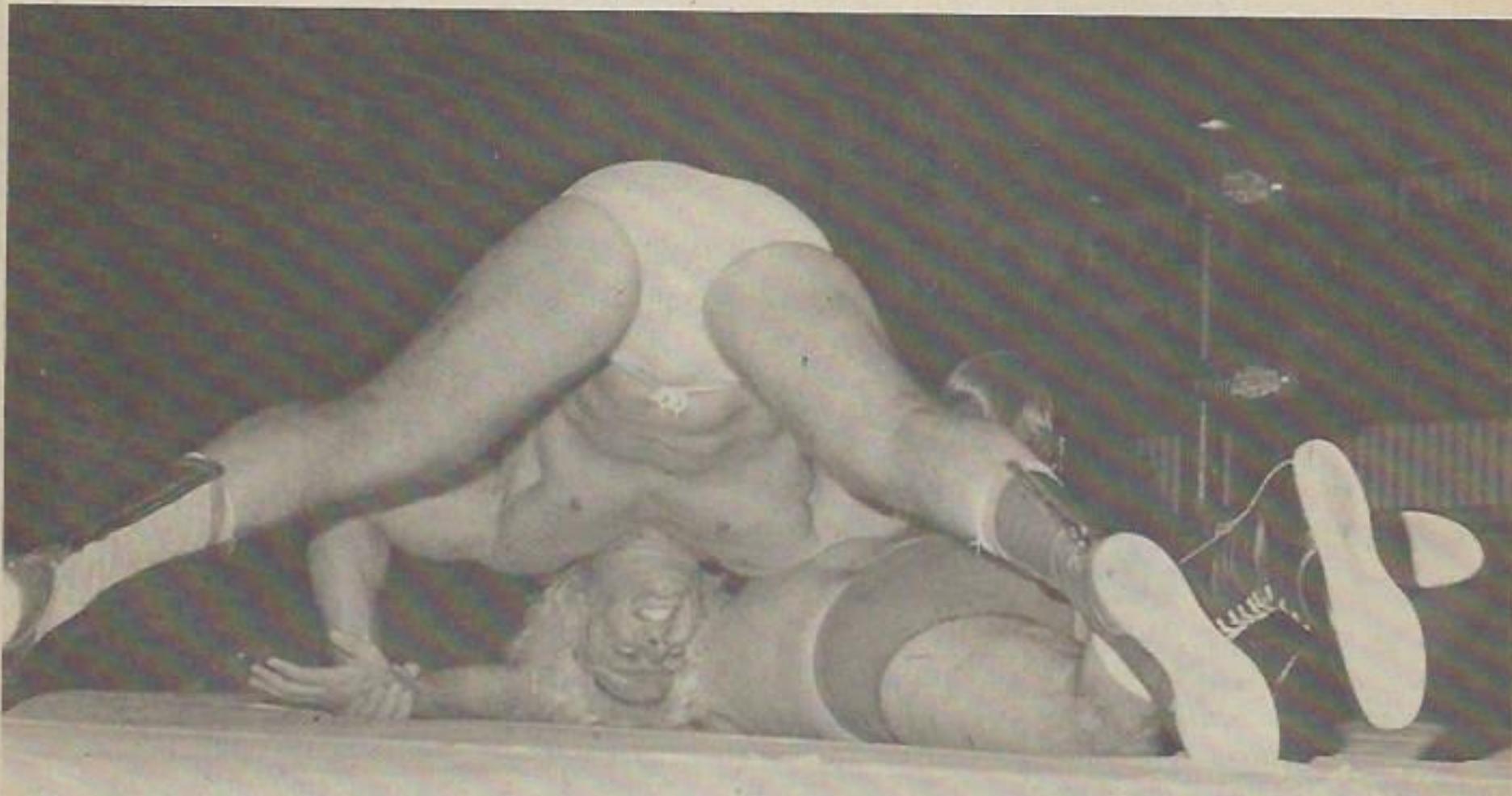
CHICAGO, IL: Have a lot of fond memories of Comiskey Park, like the Buddy Rogers-Pat O'Connor title match many years ago and the great food in the press box. And some bad ones. Met my first wife during the fourth inning of a White Sox-Indians game, but that's another story. Hate crying when I type, waters down my drinks. But I've good news. In a stunning match, Verne Gagne defeated Nick Bockwinkel for the AWA title. Went back to talk to Gagne, an old buddy. The new AWA champ was like a little kid, gushing and chuckling about the ecstasy he felt, the plans to possibly defend his title in Europe and the thrill of the crowd cheering him as he stood over Bockwinkel. Then he turned somber. Gagne said he wanted to restore honor, dignity, and truth to the AWA title. He said Bockwinkel only disgraced the title, and the need to bring back the real meaning of a champion gave him that extra little strength needed for victory. As for Bockwinkel, he claimed Gagne cheated and choked him. I dunno. Thought Bockwinkel had a bit more class than whining and complaining. If he was as big a champ as he always told everyone, Bockwinkel should've accepted defeat with grace and dignity instead of pouting.

LOS ANGELES, CA: Old feuds never die, they just lie dormant and wait a few years to erupt and reclaim their obsessed prisoners. To wit, Mil Mascaras and John Tolos. Years ago, these two tried to beat each other senseless. Then Tolos tried to wrestle scientifically, failed, and broke off his friendship with Mascaras. The feud resumed, more dangerous and deadly than ever. A bit of explanation: Tolos returned to Los Angeles insisting he would stay good forever. That lasted about 11 minutes. And that sort of deception infuriated Mascaras. No one plays with fans' emotions while Mil Mascaras has the strength to tie the laces of his mask. Whatever Tolos might say or do to Mil, the deceit practiced upon the fans had to be the last, unforgivable sin.



MIL MASCARAS

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor



RIC FLAIR

GREENSBORO, NC: I'm a Mexican food junkie and nearly overdosed from a bad tamale on the way to the airport. Maybe I shouldn't have doused it with red pepper sauce and mustard. Well, you only live once. Must confess the stewardess grew irritated when I stole three barf bags. What the heck, I gave her my phone number, that's sufficient payment. I'm starting to sound like a battered version of Eddy Mansfield, give or take a year or two. Love flying cross-country, except for the movies. Least this one was good, "Bonzo Goes to College." Love the two co-stars except I confuse them every now and then. Anyway, I'm in North Carolina, land of Makers Mark and little blondes. Speaking of little blondes, or not so little blonds, the Ric Flair-Greg Valentine war rages stronger than ever. On my list of important items, friendship ranks right up there with name-brand Scotch and a porterhouse steak. That's why this violent

feud saddens me. Flair and Valentine were once like brothers. Jealousy and misunderstandings exploded into mindless hate. They'll never make up. One of them will be destroyed.

NEW YORK, NY: This was a fine how-do-you-do. Try to get into Steve Farhood's apartment, who was kind enough to let me crash on his couch while I was between planes, and find the locks had been changed. I banged and pounded until the door opened and this bimbo broad is standing in a white Belmont Racetrack T-Shirt, nothing else. Cooly, she explains different living arrangements occurred since I'd left and my belongings were at the office. Fortunately Bill Apter was nice enough, unlike Farhood, to let me stay at his place until I find suitable accommodations. First night, me and Bill stayed up until three in the morning watching Laurel and Hardy movies. Should be fun. □

HOTSEAT

NICK BOCKWINKEL:

"I'LL GET THE BELT BACK"

HIS NAME HAS become synonymous with cunning and cruelty. And success. For almost five years, he defended the AWA title against every opponent the world could muster. Night after night, he devised a unique formula for victory, at times dubious, at times brilliant, always successful. That is, until a night at Chicago's Comiskey Park when former AWA champion Verne Gagne found the opening and penetrated his defenses, a night of disappointment and rage, the evening Nick Bockwinkel lost his beloved belt.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
BY DAN SHOCKET

Q: Sir, I would like to begin this interview by expressing my deepest and most heartfelt condolences.

A: Thanks Dan. I always

appreciate your wit and wisdom.

Q: And I your wrestling genius. What happened on that black

“
As I was just about to finish the senile old fool off, I was distracted by his punk son Greg cursing me out. Next thing I know, the old man Verne jumps me from behind and chokes me.
”

night in Chicago?

A: Gagne tried to kill me.

Q: Figures.

A: Swine.

Q: For those fans out there who couldn't be at the match, why don't you describe the events

of that horrid night?

A: Gladly. As has happened in all our bouts, I totally dominated the old fool, tossing him about the ring like a rag doll. Several times Gagne begged for mercy, pleading for restraint. I show no mercy to cowards, only men willing to pay the price of defeat. If my opponent fights back like a man, I'll show my immense decency. But cowards like Gagne?

Q: If you were thoroughly dominating the match, how did you lose?

A: By the swine's cheating, that's how. As I was about to finish the senile old fool off, I was distracted by his punk son Greg cursing me out. Foul mouth, can see where he gets it. I snapped back at Gagne. Next thing I know, old man Verne jumps me from behind





“

In my gut, in my heart and soul, I am still AWA champion. A mere belt cannot confer greatness or prestige. Only a man can be champion and only a man makes the title what it is.

”

and chokes me, I started spitting blood, the lousy ref wouldn't stop him. Standing right there and he lets Gagne choke and nearly kill me.

Q: Do you think Gagne paid off the ref?

A: Had to, how else could he possibly defeat me?

Q: How does it feel to be a former champion?

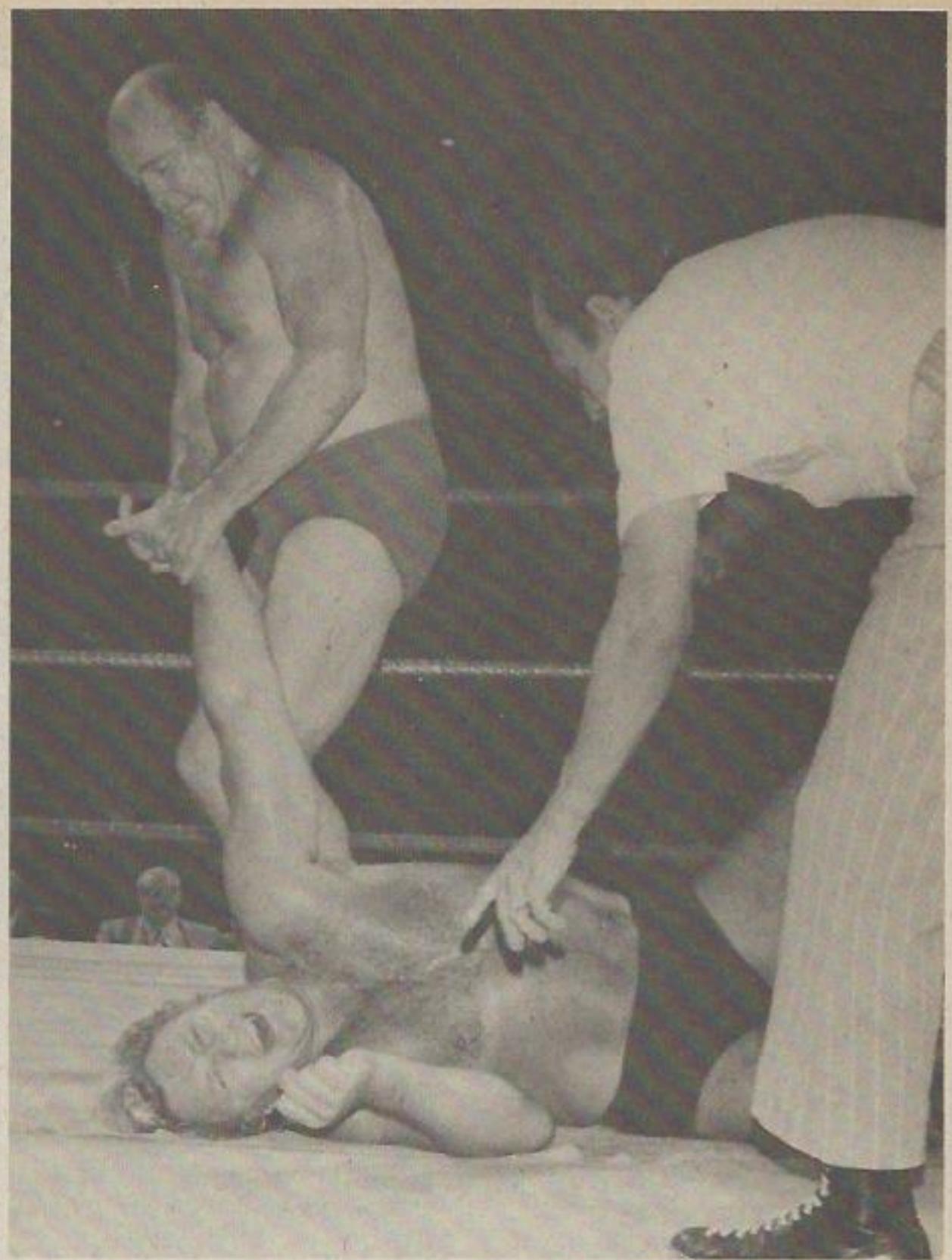
A: Former, former, that's a word for has-beens. This is merely temporary, that's all. I'll get the belt back.

Q: But how does it feel?

A: I'm still champion.

Q: I don't understand.

A: In my gut, in my heart and soul, I am still AWA champion. A mere belt cannot confer greatness or prestige. Only a man can be champion and only a man makes the title what it is. Otherwise, it's a



The referee asks Nick Bockwinkel if he would like to submit to Verne Gagne's wristlock. Bockwinkel withstood the pain but was later stopped by a controversial sleeperhold.

mere trinket, a collection of polished minerals.

Q: Obviously, you want the belt back.

A: Yeah.

Q: You sound hesitant.

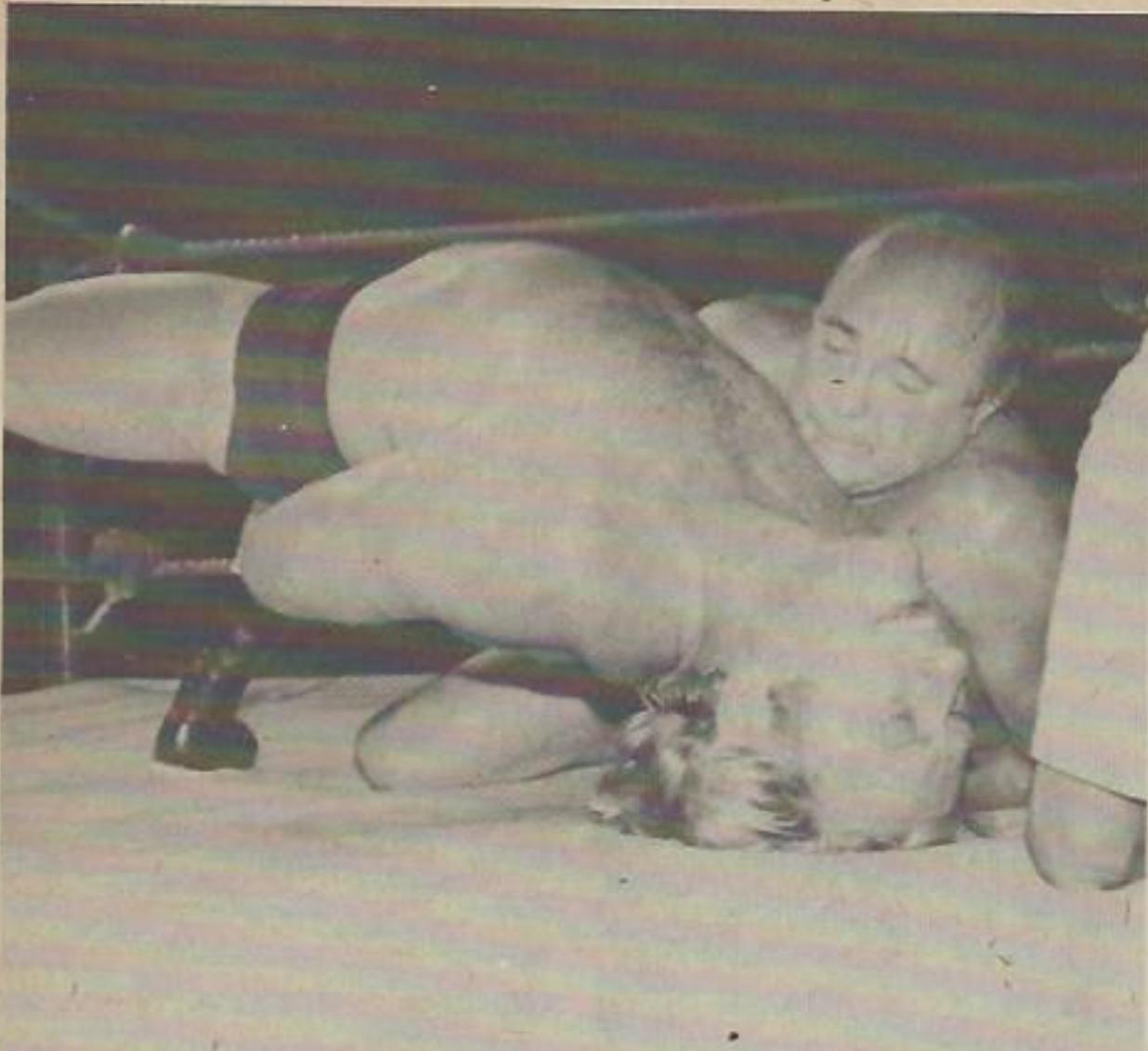
A: Well, I do want the title back, but I won't take anymore garbage from Gagne. I know he fears me and shivers at the prospect of granting me my due return match. He knows how he won the first time and knows unless he continues paying off the referees, he'll lose the belt. Then again, I might not accept the title back.

Q: Why?

A: Because I don't feel the public has the proper mental resources to fully appreciate me or understand my immense genius. I'm weary of wasting my tremendous skills on an ignorant and ungrateful public.

Q: Why do you say that?

A: I've endured enough criticism from cretins unable to comprehend my brilliant strategies. How many times must I hear how Nick Bockwinkel disqualifies himself? Don't they understand I've the match won and merely wish to avoid further injury to my inferior foes? I show the mercy of a



Gagne applies pressure to a hammerlock and Bockwinkel must neckbridge to avoid being pinned (above). Nick momentarily assumes the advantage and captures his challenger in a figure-four armlock (below).

king and they dare to accuse me of cowardice.

Q: Have you ever wanted to simply destroy someone?

A: On many occasions. The measure of a superior human being, however, is his ability to check irrational, primitive desires.

Q: Who have you wanted to destroy?

A: Well, senile Verne, for one. His punk son Greg. The time I wrestled fatso Dino Bravo.

Q: Fatso Bravo?

A: Man has the shape of a peach.

Q: Do you feel anyone understands you?

A: My tried-and-true buddy and manager Bobby Heenan understands me. No one else.

Q: Let's say you decide to reject the title when you defeat Verne Gagne. What then?

A: I think I might consider sharing my genius with the fans in other areas, though I fear their stupidity will prevent them from under-



standing. Still, I might find some competition elsewhere, surely the crop of AWA wrestlers like the Gagnes, Dino Bravo, and Tito Santana cannot give me

“
I might find some competition elsewhere, surely the crop of AWA wrestlers like the Gagnes, Dino Bravo, and Tito Santana cannot give me enough incentive to wrestle at my very best.
”

enough incentive to wrestle at my very best.

Q: Anyone you're really eager to beat?

A: That slob Dusty Rhodes would be a nice trophy hanging over my fireplace. And I'd love to whip Bruno Sammartino's head for him. Hate people who brag and don't have the muscle or brains to back up their words.

Q: Is there anyone you admire in wrestling?

A: Besides me?

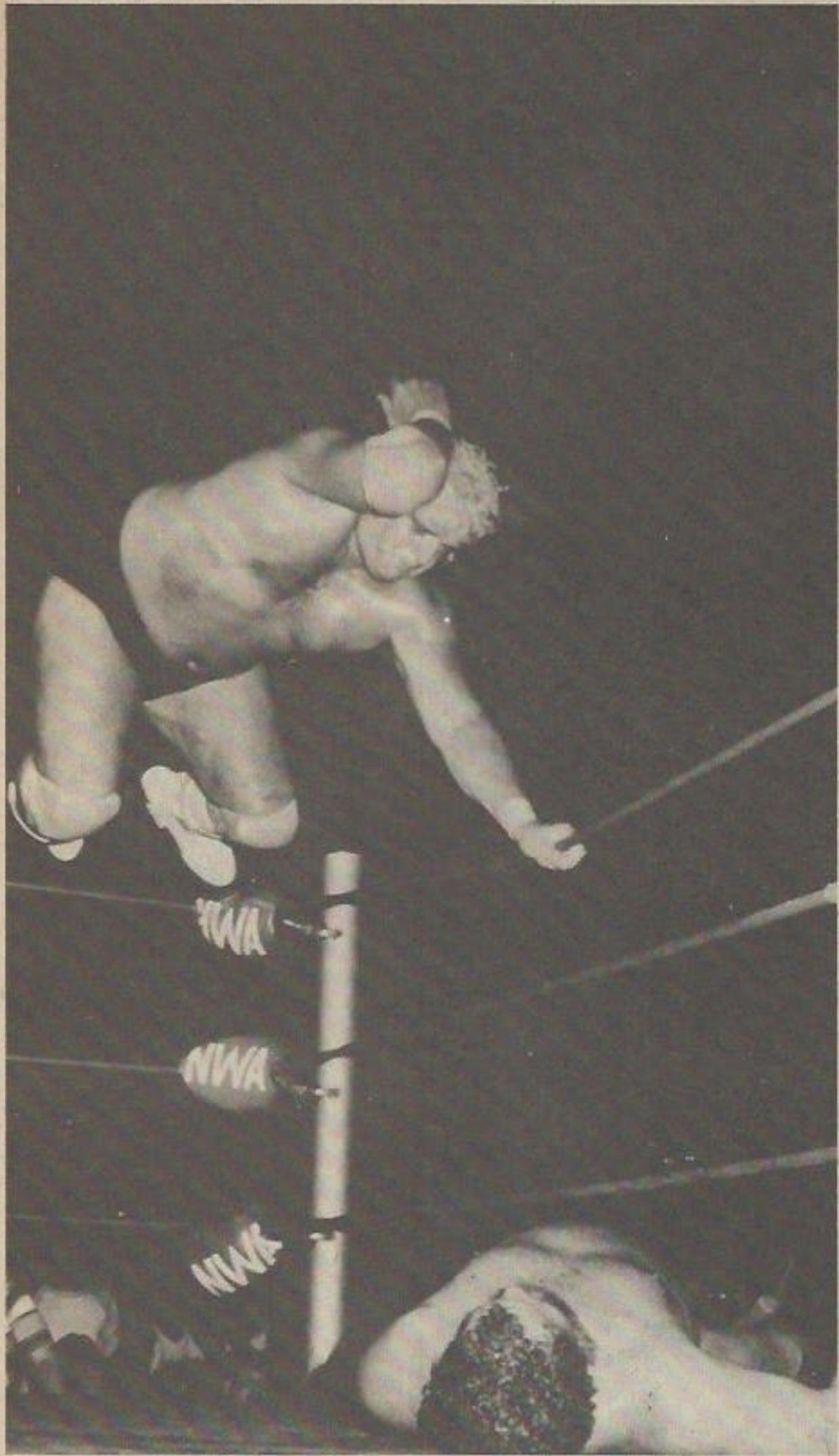
Q: Yes.

A: Uh, not counting Bobby?

Q: Right.

A: No. All buffoons and clowns, half-wits and untalented bums. What's there to admire?

Q: Sir, I want to thank you for dropping by and, personally, tell you what an inspiration you've been to all of us. □



PERHAPS IT'S ABOUT time for Dusty Rhodes to accept the inevitable and stop trying to change unalterable conditions. All this maddening fury accomplishes is more bitterness and more frustrations for the American Dream. He must understand his tragic fate has nothing to do with his enormous natural gifts and little to do with his unique blend of wrestling.

Dusty Rhodes will never have a long reign as champion simply because he is Dusty Rhodes. And he can do absolutely nothing about it.

Rhodes goes all out every second of his life, burning oil and never resting. When he wins a title, he accelerates. He increases his schedule, tackles every foe, attends every publicity and autograph signing session. Rhodes wants to act like a champion. Unfortunately, he drains his energies.

"I feel when I'm the champ I gotta act like a champ every single moment," said Rhodes. "I can't let up 'cause I got too many people lookin' up to me and believin' in me. I can't let them down."

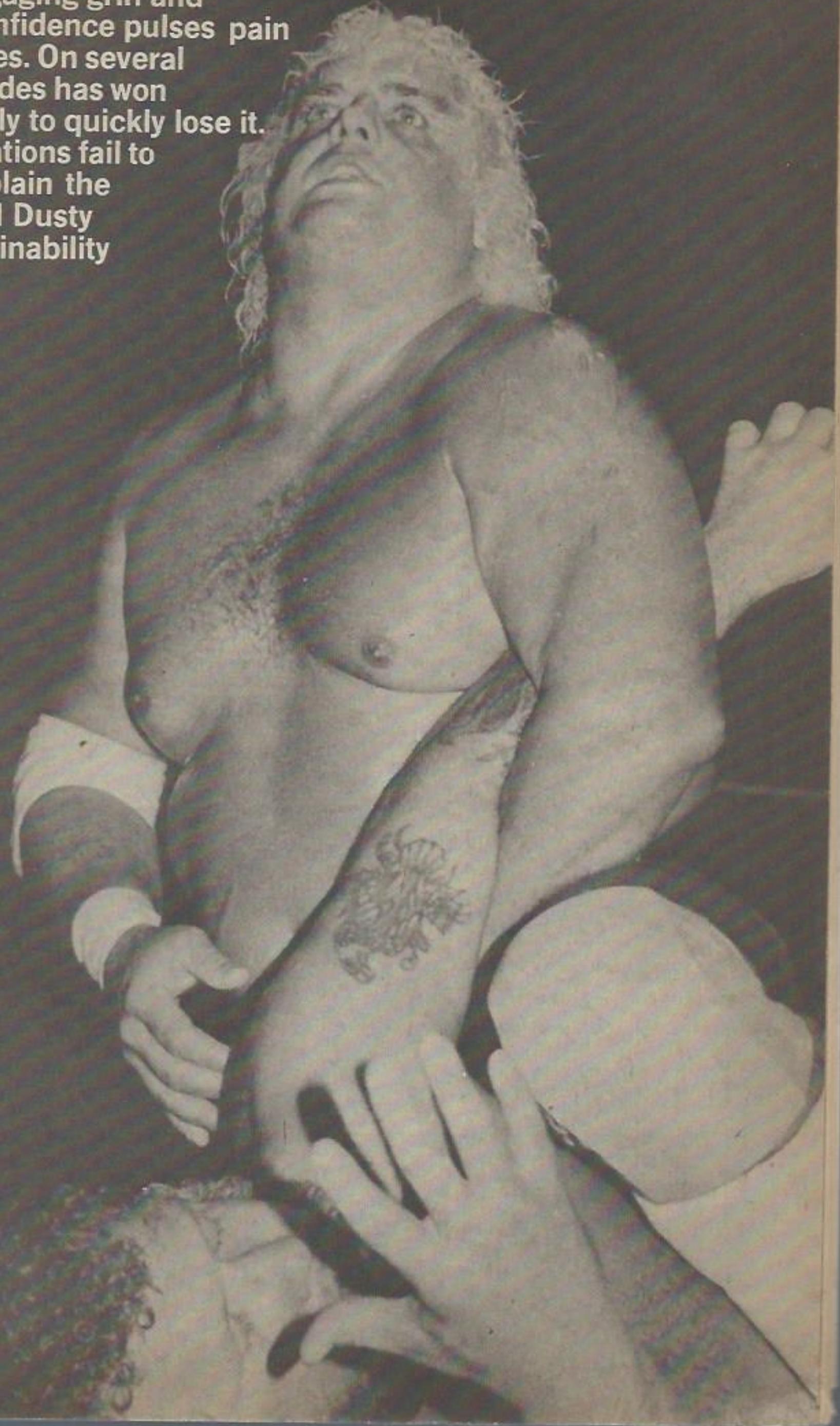
Pressure flows from two directions. Fans love Rhodes, for what he is and what he stands for. And Rhodes, determined to both fulfill and expand expectations, would never do

(Continued on page 48)

Rhodes connects with an elbowsmash from the top turnbuckle, but Race's feet were under the ropes.

DUSTY RHODES: THE MAN WHO CANNOT BE CHAMPION

Behind the engaging grin and relaxed self-confidence pulses pain for Dusty Rhodes. On several occasions, Rhodes has won a major title only to quickly lose it. Simple explanations fail to adequately explain the reasons behind Dusty Rhodes' tragic inability to hold a title



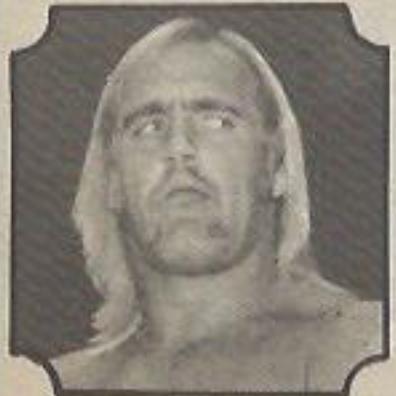
INSIDE WRESTLING'S OFFICIAL RATINGS

These Ratings Are Compiled With The Assistance Of Top Wrestlers, Promoters,
And Reporters. They Are Universally Accepted As Official

World Wrestling Federation



Champion:
BOB BACKLUND



1—HULK HOGAN

American Wrestling Association

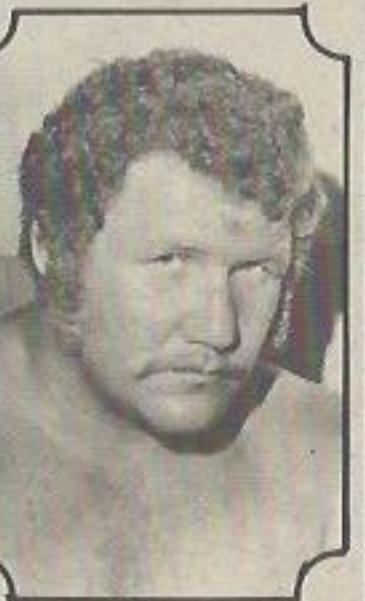


Champion:
VERNE GAGNE



1—NICK
BOCKWINKEL

National Wrestling Alliance



Champion:
HARLEY RACE



1—GREG VALENTINE

Most Popular Wrestlers



1—ANDRE THE GIANT

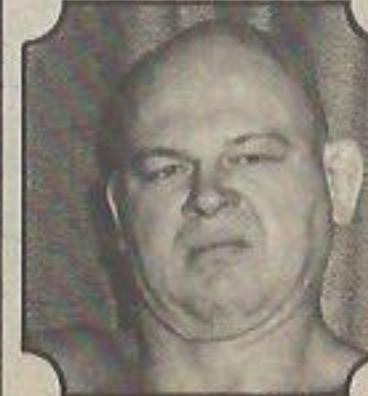


2—BRUNO
SAMMARTINO

Most Hated Wrestlers

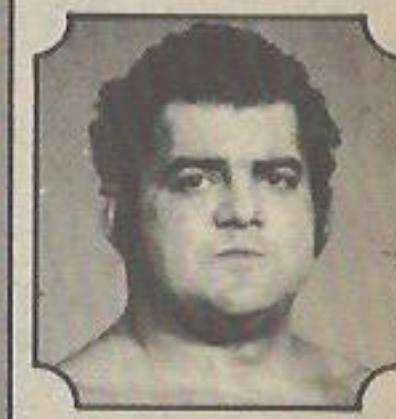


1—LARRY ZBYSZKO



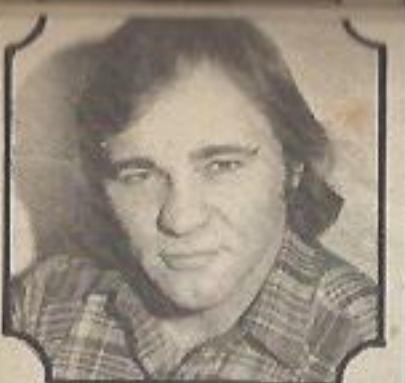
2—BARON
VON RASCHKE

Tag Teams



1—PEDRO MORALES
& BOB BACKLUND





2—LARRY ZBYSZKO



2—CRUSHER
BLACKWELL



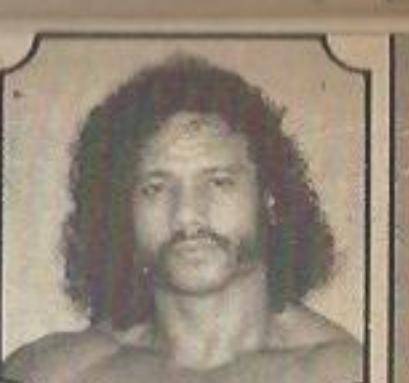
2—DUSTY RHODES



3—DUSTY RHODES



3—KEN PATERA



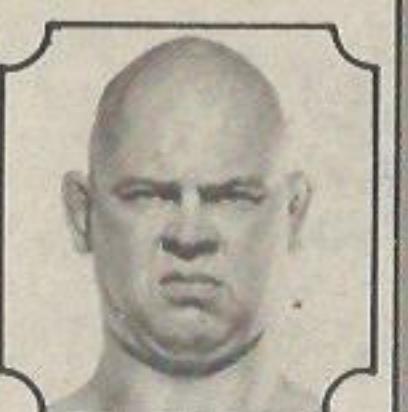
2—RAY STEVENS
& JIMMY SNUKA



3—KEN PATERA



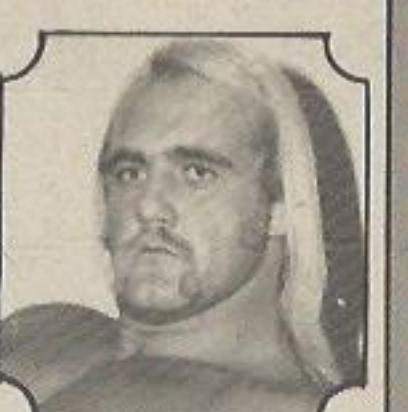
3—CRUSHER



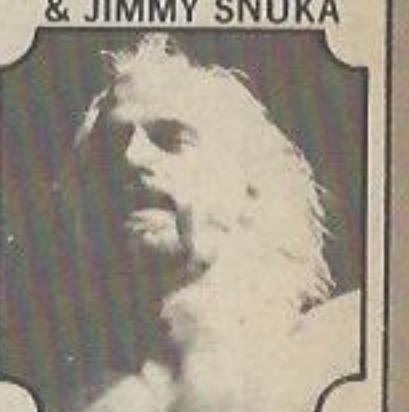
3—BARON
VON RASCHKE



4—RIC FLAIR



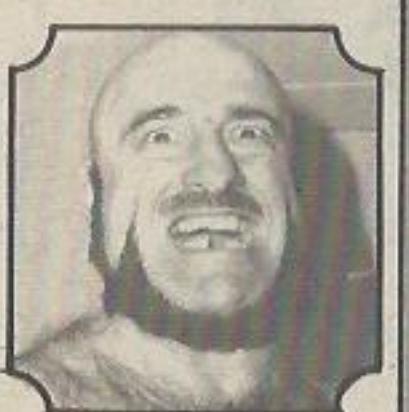
4—HULK HOGAN



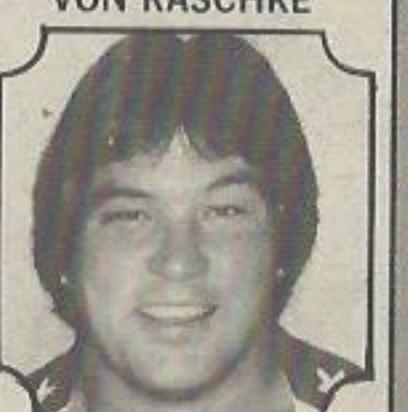
3—JESSE VENTURA
& ADRIAN ADONIS



4—PAT PATTERSON



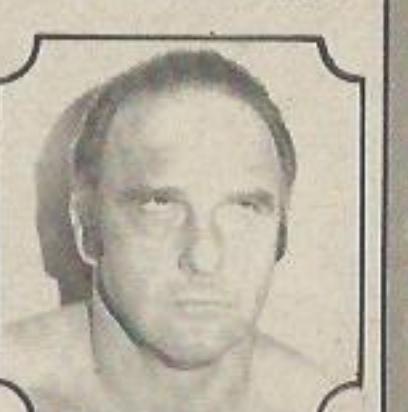
4—MAD DOG VACHON



4—TED DiBIASE



5—BOB BACKLUND



5—MARK LEWIN



4—THE ASSASSINS
5—JACK & JERRY
BRISCO

5—IVAN PUTSKI
6—PEDRO MORALES
7—TONY ATLAS
8—THE HANGMAN
9—RICK MARTEL
10—TOR KAMATA

5—DINO BRAVO
6—JESSE VENTURA
7—TITO SANTANA
8—GREG GAGNE
9—ADRIAN ADONIS
10—SUPER
DESTROYER II

5—HUSSEIN ARAB
6—KEN PATERA
7—DICK SLATER
8—MR. WRESTLING II
9—KEVIN VON ERICH
10—EL HALCON

6—MR. WRESTLING II
7—IVAN PUTSKI
8—MIL MASCARAS
9—RICK STEAMBOAT
10—TED DiBIASE

6—NICK
BOCKWINKEL
7—GREG VALENTINE
8—HARLEY RACE
9—KILLER BROOKS
10—MICHAEL HAYES

4—VERNE GAGNE &
MAD DOG VACHON
9—DAVID & KEVIN
VON ERICH
10—THE SAMOANS

BEHIND EVERY MASK lurks a mystery. The Masked Assassins are no exception. Everyone wonders about their identities. Are they escaped convicts from some chain gang, renegades from society?

Not surprisingly, The Assassins do not fall into either of these categories. They belong to a wider group, one all fans immediately recognize.

You know the type: handsome, well-built, polite to fans, and respectful to their elders. Men intent on winning within the rules and contemptuous of those who use foreign objects or other deceitful tricks.

Scientific wrestlers. The truth can be revealed. The Assassins are former good guys turned evil. And we know who they are.

Hold the trumpets and silence the cymbals. Their

like it was too late for the others."

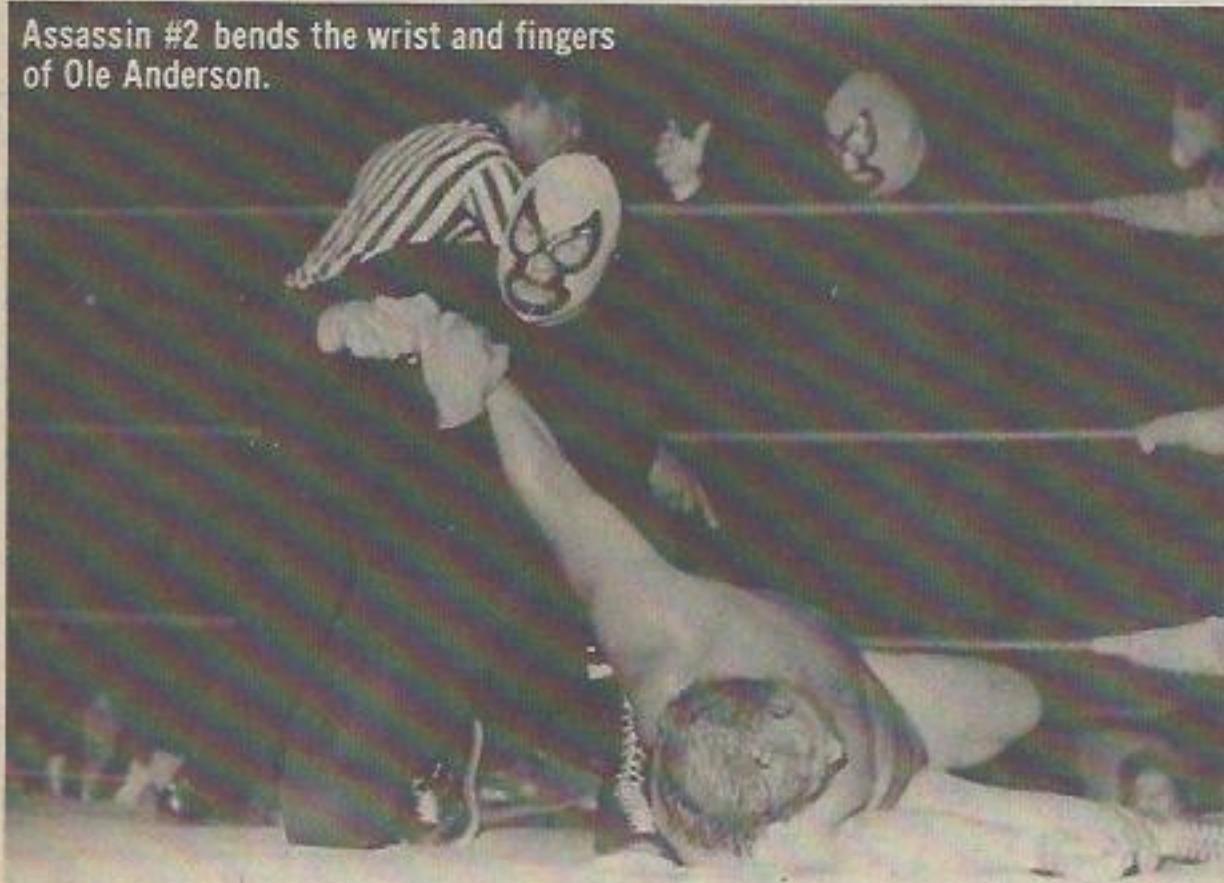
Arrangements were made to meet this nervous man. A sleazy diner on Manhattan's upper West Side was selected. Late at night, near midnight, two of INSIDE WRESTLING's editors, Bill Apter and Stu Saks, met with the source. Saks' report:

"A couple of winos sat at the counter, sipping coffee and trying to make lewd conversation with the bored waitress. She chewed gum and gave me and Bill dirty looks when we asked for a menu. I ordered a coke. I was afraid to order food. Bill ordered an individual can of tuna and a large Hi C strawberry drink. We waited, as asked, in a back booth. We'd been there about 20 minutes when this skinny little guy with big black-rimmed glasses, a long gray raincoat, tattered

and what territory they wrestled in. He told us he'd been their friend but they'd beaten him up when he forgot to pay off a debt of \$5. He said they repeatedly betrayed friends, befriending someone, gaining their trust, and then stabbing them in the back in a variety of ways.

"I asked if he was simply bitter and seeking revenge. He started crying, then choked for a few minutes on a lump of feta cheese. When he'd recovered, he denied any desire for revenge. He said he had nowhere to go, no job, wanted nothing from this. All he wanted to do was stop them before they hurt someone. I asked how we could stop them if we couldn't disclose their identity. He said we should blackmail The Assassins. He said we should coerce them into leaving the

Assassin #2 bends the wrist and fingers of Ole Anderson.



identities were revealed to us by a frightened young man. He'd only disclose their backgrounds under one condition.

"I'll tell ya who they are but ya can't print it 'cause they'll know who told ya and come after me," his husky voice cracked over the phone wires. "Only reason I'm tellin' ya who they are is so ya can stop 'em 'fore it's too late,

sneakers, and a distraught expression walked in, looked around and approached us.

"The code word was anchovy. He wouldn't give his name and never took off his raincoat, though he did order a large Greek salad. He spoke in a rush, spittle sliding down his chin, trembling lower lip. He told us who The Assassins were

WHY THE ASSASSINS' SECRET IDENTITY CAN'T

sport or else reveal their sordid backgrounds. At this point Bill and I left."

The obvious dilemma was the disposition of this information. Three alternatives faced us:

1. We could ignore the information, though an exhaustive series of phone calls confirmed the essential

(Continued on page 54)



T BE REVEALED

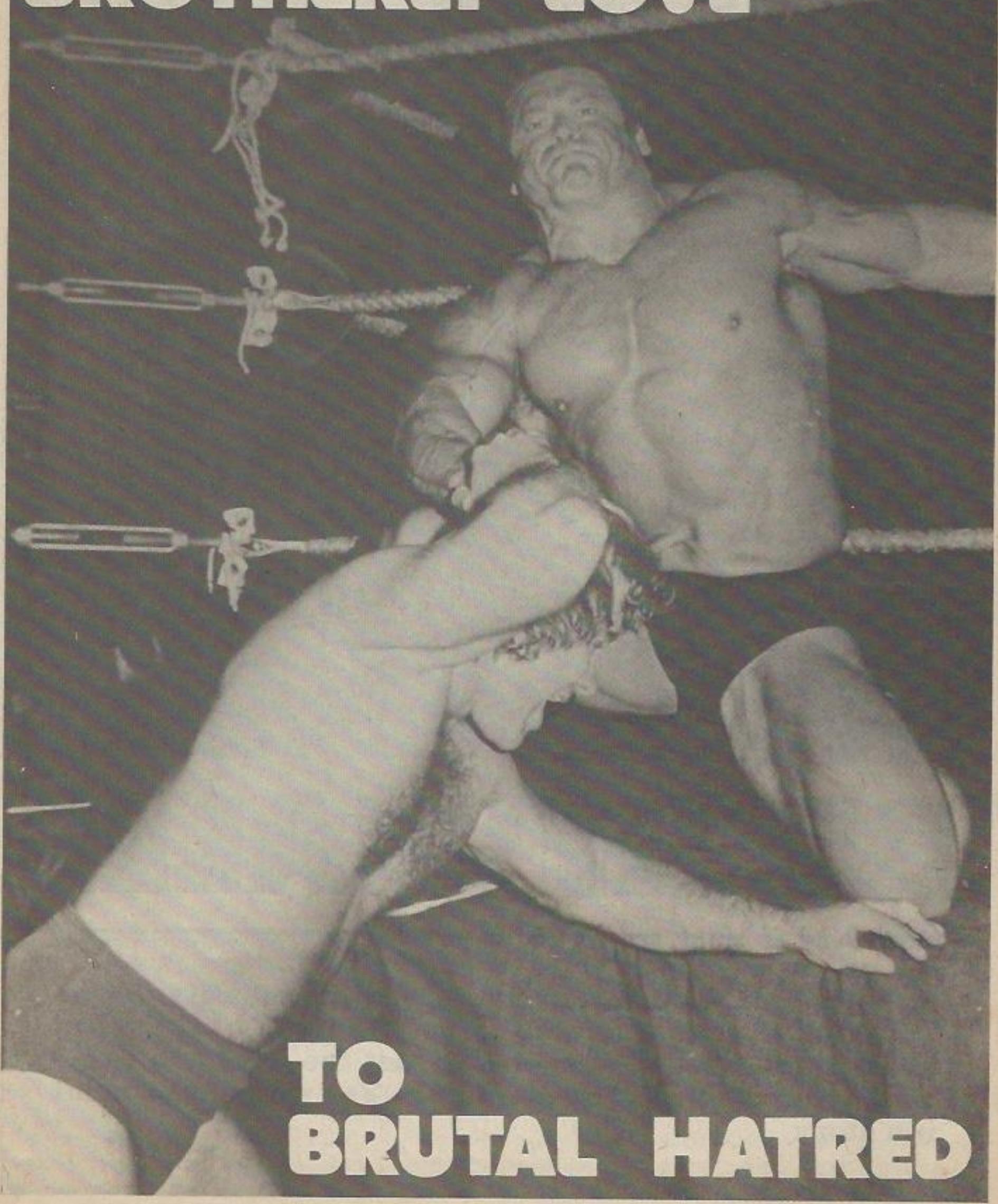
PHOTOS BY BILL APTER & MAGGIE ADKINS

A voice called and told us he knew the identity of The Masked Assassins, current Georgia tag team champions. Two of our editors met the man and came away overwhelmed by the truth. Yet we cannot print his story

Zbyszko vs. Putski:

**FROM
BROTHERLY LOVE**

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER



**TO
BRUTAL HATRED**

KIELBASI SIZZLED attracting Ivan Putski's attention. Always polite, Putski excused himself and disappeared into the kitchen. Humming a Polish love song, Putski attended to the kielbasi. The refrigerator door opened, shut, and Putski re-appeared with a bottle of imported Polish beer.

"Great stuff," said Putski, pouring two glasses. "Wouldn't drink anything but the beer of my people." Putski leaped up, again disappeared into the kitchen, and returned with a steaming platter of Polish delicacies.

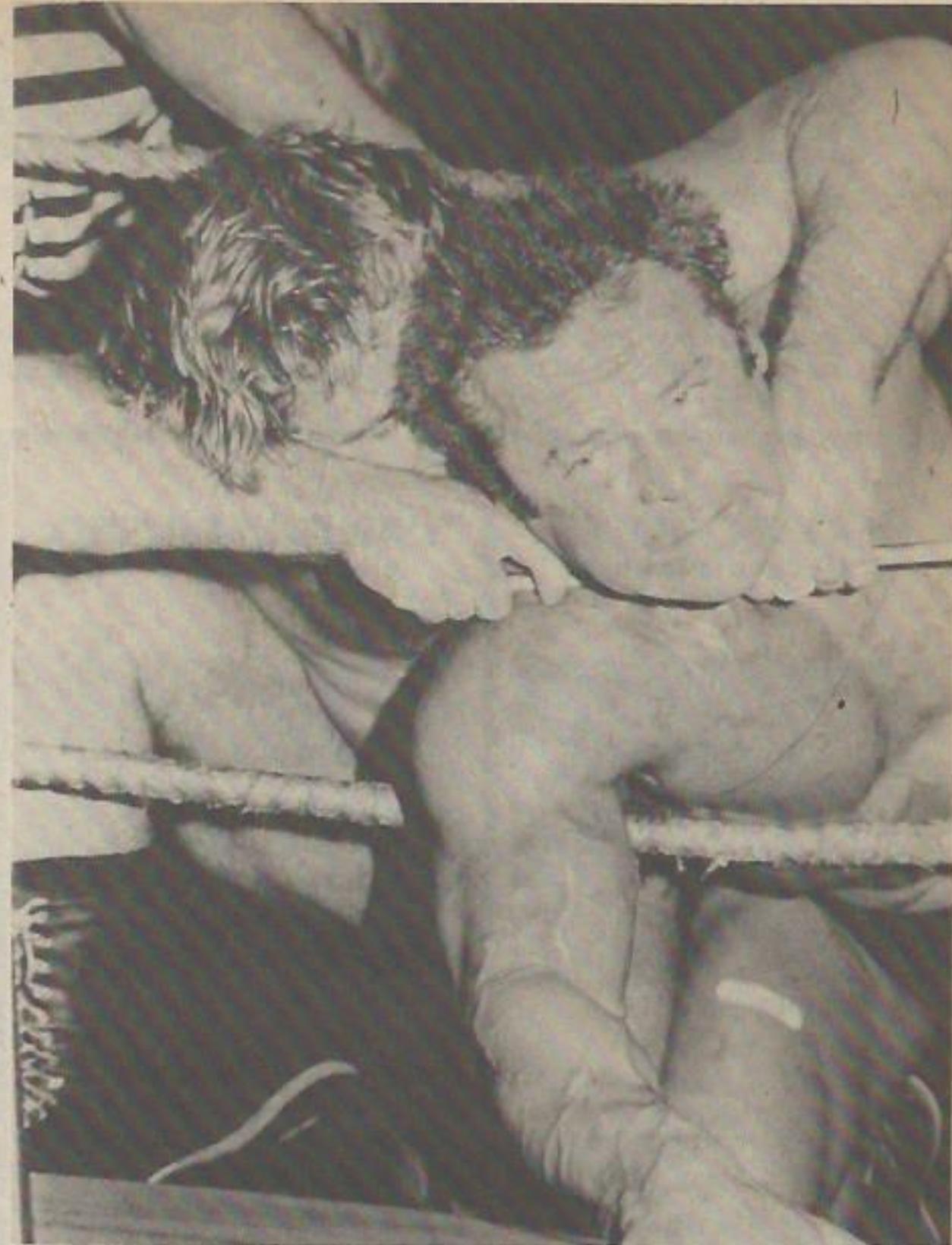
Ivan Putski set the table, getting the silverware from an antique dresser beneath a picture of General Pulaski.

"My hero," said Putski. "What would General Pulaski say about that traitor Larry Zbyszko?"

Both Putski and Zbyszko descend from Polish stock. In their own unique ways, both are proud of their heritage and would do nothing to disgrace that grand tradition. In their own ways, this schism brings these two talented wrestlers on a frighteningly violent collision course.

"Larry Zbyszko makes me sick. All Poles cry for the shame he brings his people. Poles value loyalty and friendship above everything else. And the way Zbyszko turned his back on Bruno and turned his back on his fans goes against everything we Poles hold dear.

"In the Polish household, a friend is always welcome. A child will bring his friend into



More than a mere wrestling match, the Larry Zbyszko-Ivan Putski confrontation was a battle for national honor. Putski slams Zbyszko's face to the ring apron (opposite left) and Zbyszko chokes Putski with the ropes (above).

the house during dinner and, even in the poorest of homes, that friend will be invited to break bread. Imagine someone inviting a guest to Zbyszko's house? He'd throw them out, accuse them of hurting his career, and say they're part of some diabolical plot to deny him his just glory.

"Polish people work for what they get. If you're good enough, we believe you'll eventually achieve your goals. But we don't step on people's faces to win. To us, that's not winning. To Zbyszko, that's everything."

Zbyszko's perception of Polish Power differs greatly.

(Continued on page 56)

Once Ivan Putski and Larry Zbyszko were like brothers, sharing moments and thoughts, helping each other the way real brothers would. Then the Zbyszko-Bruno Sammartino feud erupted, dragging Zbyszko and Putski apart until the love curdled into hate, the friendship into a bitter rivalry

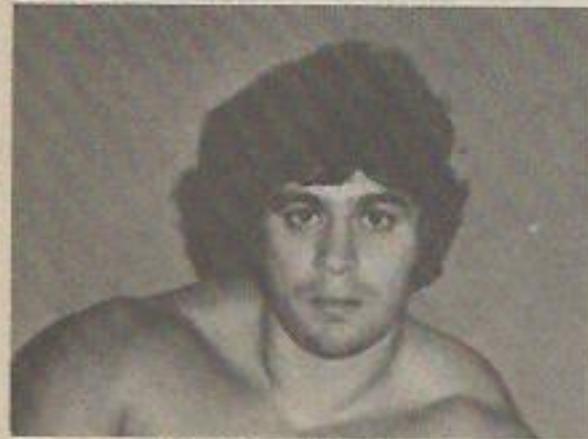
NEWS FROM THE

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor, Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

ROCKFORD, IL

By Cherrie Rush



DINO BRAVO
vs.
JERRY BLACKWELL



It was a thrilling night of action. The grudge match between Dino Bravo and Jerry Blackwell was the highlight as the \$5,000 winner's share was hung above the ring. The first one to go up the ladder and retrieve the money was the winner. Blackwell really took a beating from Bravo as Dino pummeled him with the ladder. Bravo was the deserved winner of this match.

OTHER BOUTS: Lord Al Hays suffered a beating at the hands of Bobby Heenan . . . Steve Olsonoski and Super Destroyer II wrestled to a draw . . . Adrian Adonis and Jesse Ventura combined to defeat Greg Gagne and Mad Dog Vachon.

LANDOVER, MD

By Tim Leadbeater



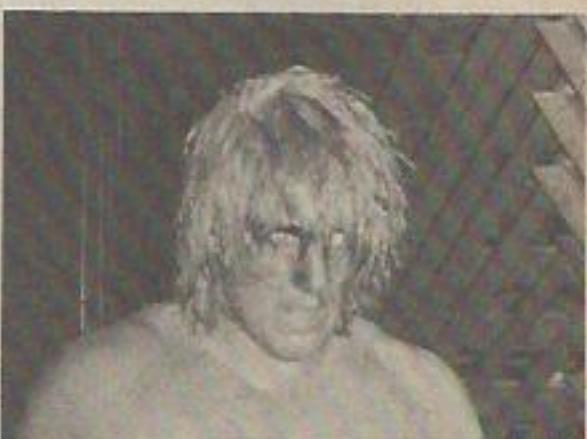
KEN PATERA
vs.
TONY ATLAS



The Inter-Continental championship was on the line in this duel between champion Ken Patera and Tony Atlas. Patera warned Atlas to quit right away, but with the crowd behind him, Atlas exploded with rights and lefts to Patera's head. Then Patera snared Atlas in a painful bearhug. Atlas overcame the hold only to be caught in a combination half-nelson and chokehold. The special referee, Gorilla Monsoon, disqualified Patera for not releasing the hold, but that disqualification enabled Patera to retain his title.

GREENVILLE, SC

By Keith Craft



RIC FLAIR
vs.
GREG VALENTINE



This bout was for the United States Heavyweight title. Greg Valentine, who'd broken Ric Flair's nose and insulted the champion by insisting he was the new "Nature Boy," attacked before the bell. Valentine tore off Flair's nose-guard and worked on his injured nose. Flair swiftly retaliated and tried to break Valentine's nose. Quickly, both were bloody messes. There was no scientific wrestling in this match, only kicking and gouging. The match ended with both men battling outside the ring.

OTHER BOUTS: Sweet Ebony Diamond won by disqualification over Masked Superstar #1 . . . Gene Lewis and Swede Hanson stopped S.D. Jones and Pedro Morales . . .

WRESTLING CAPITALS



WACO, TX

By Scott Smith



ANDRE THE GIANT
vs.
TORU TANAKA



In the main event, Andre the Giant took on bitter rival Professor Toru Tanaka. From the opening bell, Tanaka lunged at Andre and seized him in a bearhug. That proved short-lived as Andre used his enormous strength to easily escape Tanaka's grasp. Andre continually foiled Tanaka's attempts at choking, gouging, and karate chopping. Finally, Andre knocked Tanaka to the mat and pounced on him for the victory.

OTHER BOUTS: Kevin Von Erich defeated J.J. Dillon . . . Kerry Von Erich whipped Jonathan Boyd . . . Mr. Hito drew with Sweet Brown Sugar.

TRENTON, NJ

By Stephen Zamonski



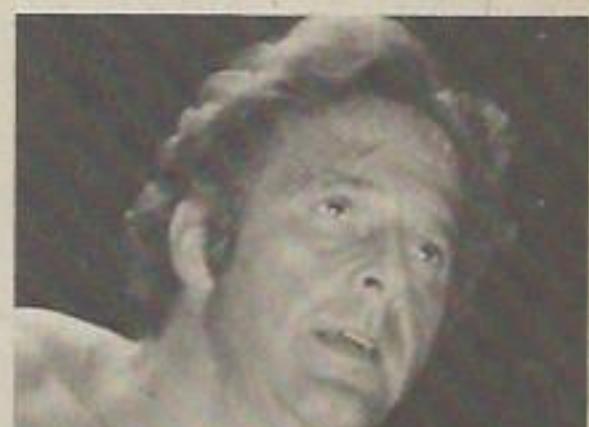
PAT PATTERSON
vs.
LARRY ZBYSZKO



The co-main event pitted hated Larry Zbyszko against fan favorite Pat Patterson. The match was back-and-forth for the first few minutes with each man gaining short advantages. Then Zbyszko threw Patterson out of the ring. The two battled in and out of the ring until Patterson grabbed Zbyszko's leg and slammed it on the ring post three times. Again they battled outside of the ring until Zbyszko somehow freed himself and pushed Patterson headfirst into the post. Zbyszko scrambled into the ring and Patterson, badly hurt, was unable to return.

ANNISTON, AL

By Gary Guinn



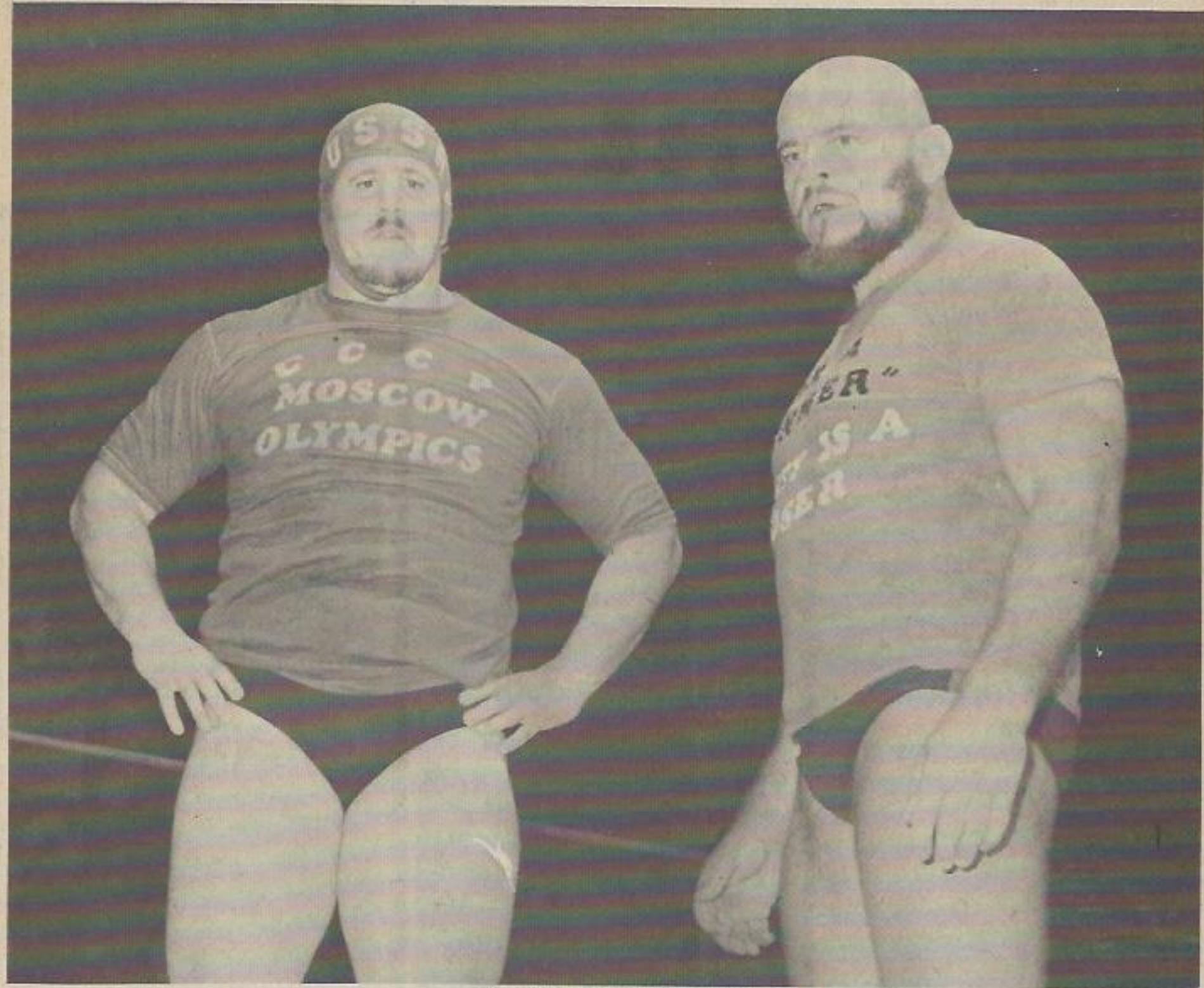
MARK LEWIN
vs.
STAN HANSEN



The main event was scheduled to be Austin Idol versus Mark Lewin, but Idol was unable to appear and was replaced by Stan Hansen. Lewin's manager, the Great Mephisto, repeatedly interfered, enraging Hansen and earning the ire of the capacity crowd. When Hansen grabbed Lewin and started flinging him across the ring, Mephisto ran in and again interfered, causing Lewin to be disqualified.

OTHER BOUTS: Lars and Ole Anderson whipped The Assassins . . . Mike George defeated Moose Monroe . . . Iron Mike Sharpe overpowered Denis Candree. □

IN DEFENSE OF



PHOTOS BY BILL OTTEN

KOLOFF & VOLKOFF

By Dan Shocket

TO SPIT ON the Mona Lisa would be the act of a madman. Desecrating any work of art is a moral and legal crime. Except in wrestling, where the best is almost always ruined.

Wrestling fans are clamoring for the destruction of the best new tag team in wrestling, Ivan Koloff and Nikolai Volkoff.

Instead of appreciating their wrestling genius, the fans are demanding they be banned. For good measure, they're also asking for the scalp of the team's manager, Sir Oliver Humperdink.

This is from the same group that adores Jack and Jerry Brisco, bozos of the lowest order. The Brisco brothers are cheered at their every

appearance. Fans pray that these two mediocrities will destroy Volkoff and Koloff.

In a recent match, the referee did everything but jump on Volkoff to help Jack Brisco. Clearly, he was under orders from the commission to give the Briscos every break. The commission is out to please the fans, always on the side of flunkies like the Briscos.

This means Volkoff and Koloff won't stand a chance. The greatness that should be theirs will be stolen from them. Also, their greatness will be stolen from the history of wrestling. That means it will be stolen from us all.

Certainly, the Briscos need protection. Anyone watching Koloff and Volkoff can see the Briscos would be doomed in a fair match. These two superb athletes are perfectly meshed. Humperdink guides them with a flexible hand, letting the pair discover for themselves what is

The Russian strongmen work on the left arm of Jack Brisco. Nikolai Volkoff twists Brisco's wrist . . .



Associate Editor Dan Shocket knows and understands wrestling rulebreakers better than any man alive. In this probing and startling story, Shocket examines the brutal tactics of Russian invaders Nikolai Volkoff and Ivan Koloff. His opinions will horrify all fans

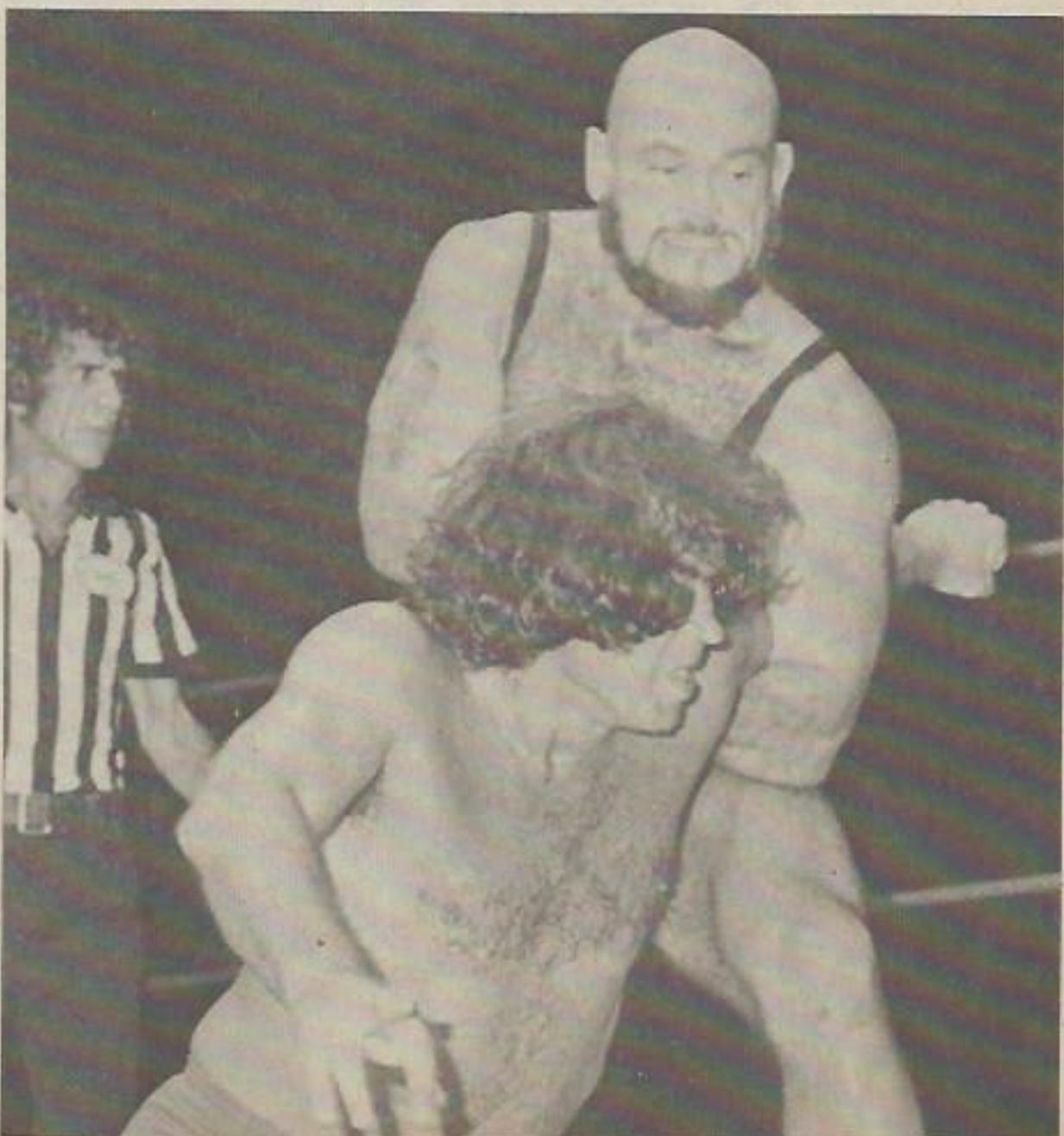
best. He doesn't give them strategies but ideas. He trusts them to be great. They don't disappoint him.

It would be a pity if Humperdink wasn't allowed to realize his own greatness. The NWA seems intent on banning him from the sport. They have hounded, betrayed, and publicly ridiculed him. His other teams have been forced to disband. The NWA is afraid of him. Because of that, they're out to get him.

As one might expect, Humperdink is desolate that the NWA will destroy what could become his greatest creation. Most men would have quit a long time ago, unable to stand the pressure of these evil men. Humperdink can't quit.

"Sure," he admits, "I come on strong. I have no choice. I'm

. . . while Koloff directs his attention at the upper part of Jack's arm.



battling for my life out there. The officials are all against me and my wrestlers. I know the

referees will do anything in their power to handcuff my wrestlers. Hell, if I cheated half

as much as the referees, I'd be in jail!

"Every wrestler who works for me is taking a big chance. I owe them 110 percent of myself because of it. They know before getting in the ring, the entire NWA is against them. I love my wrestlers like children."

Knowing the world is against them, why do the best wrestlers flock to Humperdink?

"He brings out the best in you," Koloff declares, "and brings out the best in your partner. When he first approached me to wrestle with Volkoff, I wasn't sure. After talking with him for an hour, I knew it was the best thing that ever happened to me."

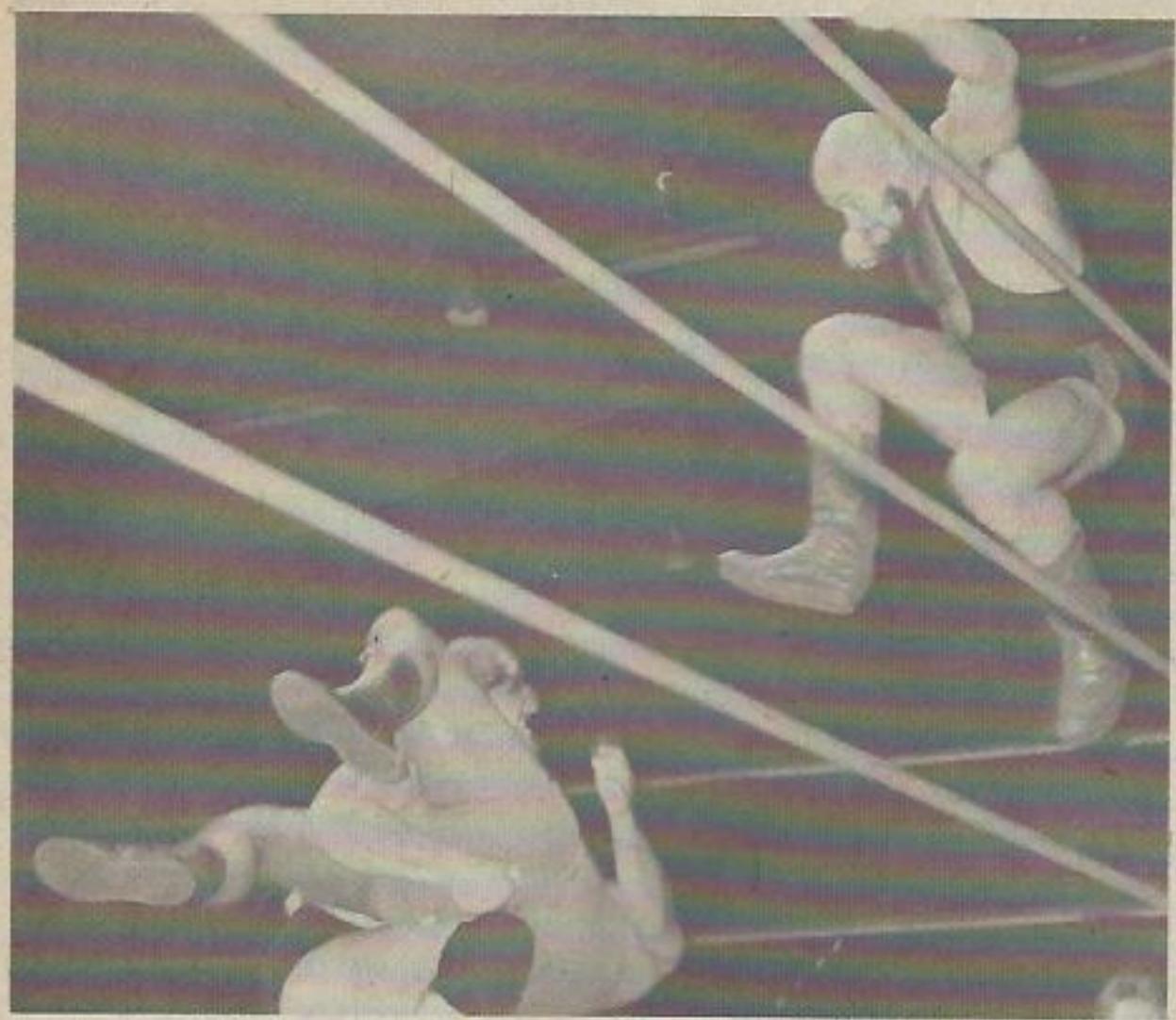
"I don't care if the NWA is against me. I don't care if the entire world is against me. We will conquer! We will conquer! I promise you that."

"By this time next year, the Briscos will be only bad memories. The rest of the NWA will be at our feet. I promise you that."

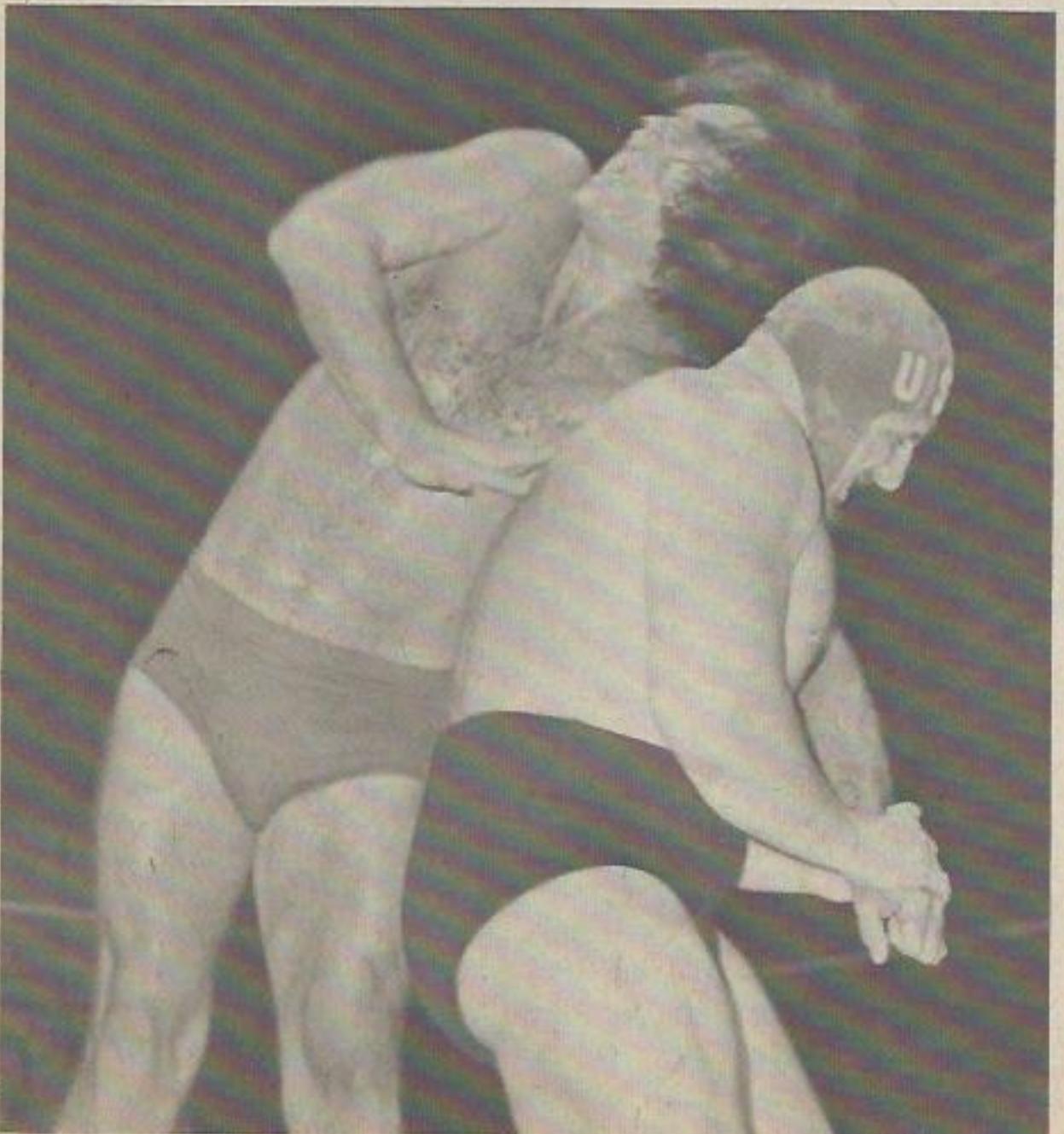
"Volkoff and Koloff will be the greatest team in wrestling history. We will take the NWA, AWA, and WWF belts. Under the guidance of Sir Oliver Humperdink, we will rule the wrestling world! I promise you that."

I have no doubt Koloff will keep his promises, if he is given the chance. The NWA will do everything in its power to stop him. I would not be surprised if Humperdink is banned before the year is out. They will do anything to stop the manager and his superb team. They have authority on their side. When men are pitted against a bureaucracy, the men almost always lose.

It is a crime and a pity. And who will be the most responsible? Who will cheer every tragedy? The fans. May they get what they deserve. □



While Volkoff arches Jerry Brisco's back across his knee, Koloff leaps upon Jerry from the top turnbuckle (above). Volkoff pumps Jack's arm across his shoulder (below).



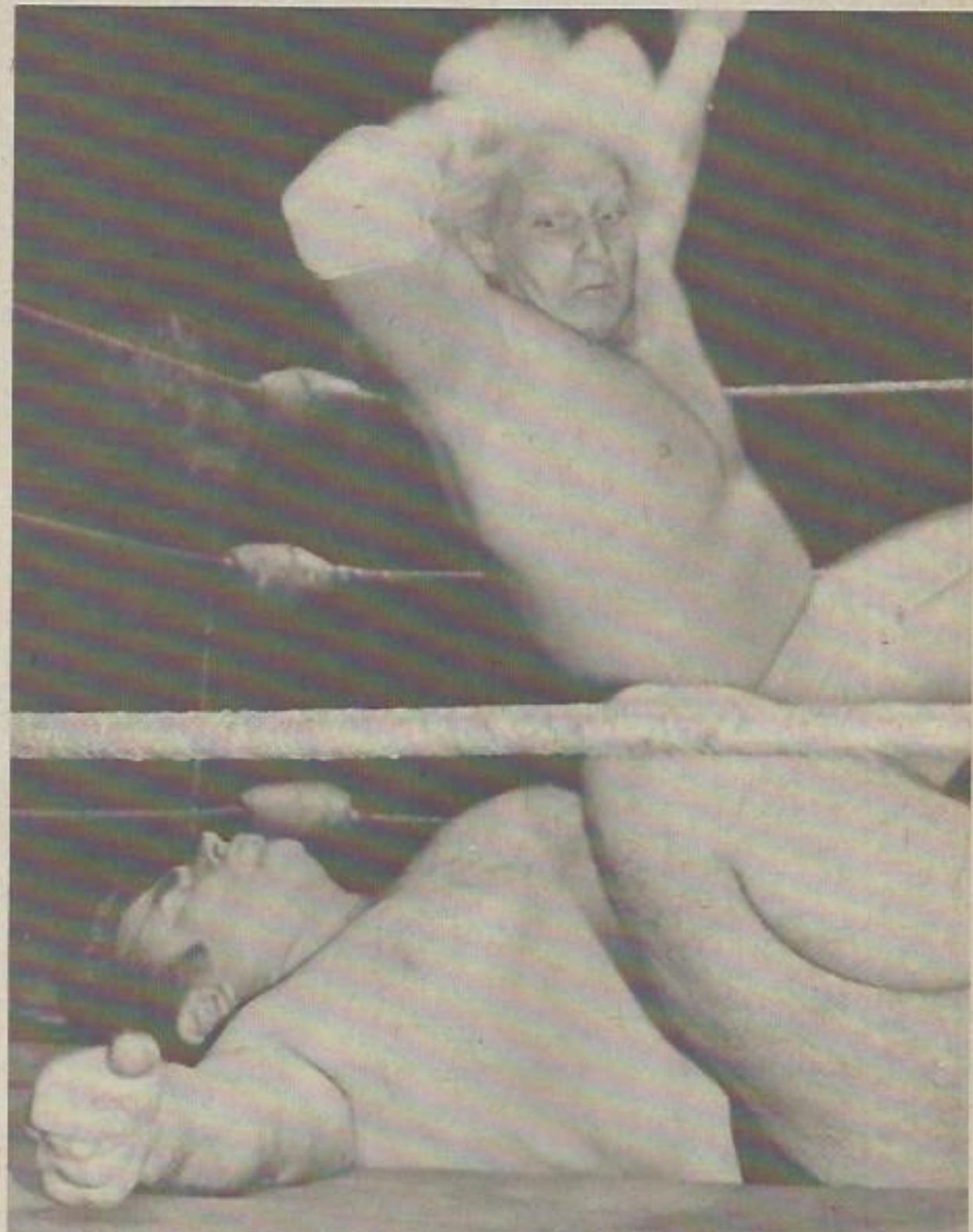
INSIDE WRESTLING

52

CAPSULE PROFILE

WHEREAS OTHER WRESTLERS prefer studying themselves through videotapes, he uses a mirror ("Got 27 mirrors in my place. Never get tired of lookin' at myself. Why should I? I'm gorgeous, right?") . . . Claims women find him irresistible and their crazed support aids him in his wrestling endeavors ("How'd you feel if you were wrestlin' a hunk like me and all the ladies were screamin' for me and callin' you ugly. Make you inadequate since no one compares with my looks or body") . . . Works as hard in the gym as he does before the mirror ("I gotta keep my body in shape. Can't allow perfection to slip away") . . . Relies on a charming cunning in his ring maneuvers ("Sometimes I'll meet one of them big, dumb dudes and I gotta out-think and out-maneuver that big fool") . . . Made quite an impression on the Texas wrestling world ("Bunch of lames there,

EDDY MANSFIELD



Though his outstanding characteristic is his massive ego, his wrestling talents cannot be denied. Eddy Mansfield is one of the top wrestlers in Texas. The Continental Lover says he will wrestle anyone, provided he makes enough money to provide for his expensive taste.

none of 'em could keep up with me") . . . Blinding speed and instinctive wrestling skills continually unbalance foes ("I was twice blessed, with natural ability and incredible looks") . . . Favorite maneuver is the flying elbowsmash ("Love the sound of a skull fracturin'") . . . Has no particular rival, preferring to wrestle anyone who offers a challenge ("Long as I get my dough so I can buy clothes and get ladies, I don't care. No wrestler ever scared me and I kinda doubt any ever will") . . . Calls himself The Continental Lover ("Fits me like an imported three-piece suit"). □

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Each day, out of the thousands of letters we receive, hundreds of them are from fans asking the whereabouts of their favorite wrestler. In this special column, we will try to answer the questions you ask the most!

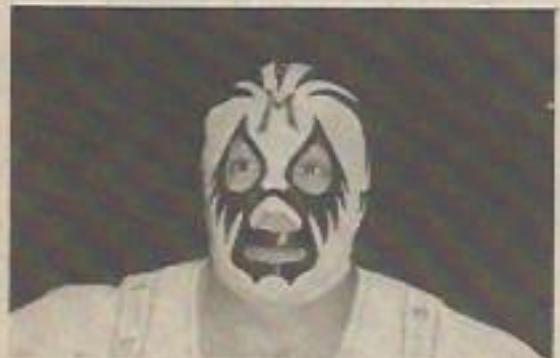


RICK MARTEL

Young, handsome, and strong, Rick Martel has moved into the WWF where he seeks long-term engagements. Already fans have taken a liking to this powerfully built, enormously talented youngster. Proof of Martel's powers come in the form of threats from such managers as Fred Blassie and Lou Albano, who have vowed Martel's demise.

JOHN STUDD

This miserable and loathsome character is currently terrorizing foes in the AWA, displaying his cruelty at every conceivable opportunity. Fans daring to ask for his autograph are growled away, and opponents attempting a scientific match are beaten back with rough tactics and foreign objects.



MIL MASCARAS

The popular masked man is making several appearances in Los Angeles. Lured by John Tolos' inexcusable betrayal of fan trust, Mascaras wants to show wrestling fans that not all wrestlers will sell their affection for a bag of gold, as Tolos apparently has.

STAN STASIAK

Stasiak cannot resist a challenge. In Texas arenas, the name of Von Erich has grown to legendary proportions. Stasiak seeks to shatter this legend and drive all the Von Erichs out of wrestling. The Von Erichs must be very wary of this brutal man and his deadly maneuver, the Heartpunch.

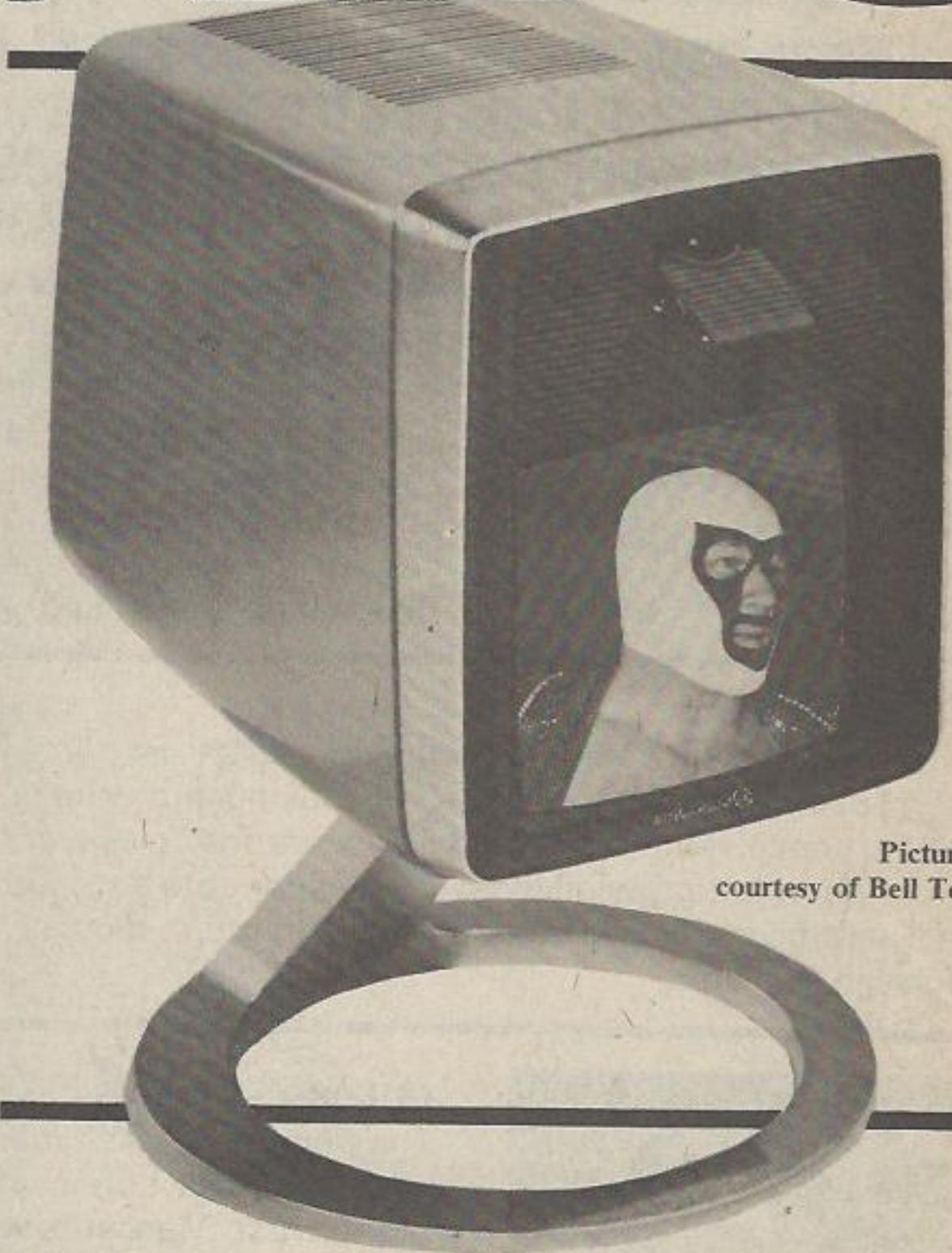


ONE O



(Mr. Wrestling II and The Great Mephisto are about as far apart on all matters of life and wrestling as two men can possibly be. II listens to fans, respects the rules, respects his peers, shows total kindness and decency to all men. On the other hand, Mephisto disdains all human contact, expresses contempt for people, seeks to shatter rules and mold new ones through his sick soul. Mephisto's top two wrestlers, Mark Lewin and Abdullah the Butcher, wreak havoc within Georgia wrestling arenas. But their reign will be short-lived if Mr. Wrestling II has any say in the matter.)

Every month the telephone wires will crackle as two top grapplers rage and argue. We'll print the unedited transcript of their conversations, giving the fans a privileged glimpse at wrestlers which can be found nowhere else



Picturephones
courtesy of Bell Telephone

MR. WRESTLING II:

So you finally showed enough guts to confront me, even if it is over a phone?

GREAT MEPHISTO:

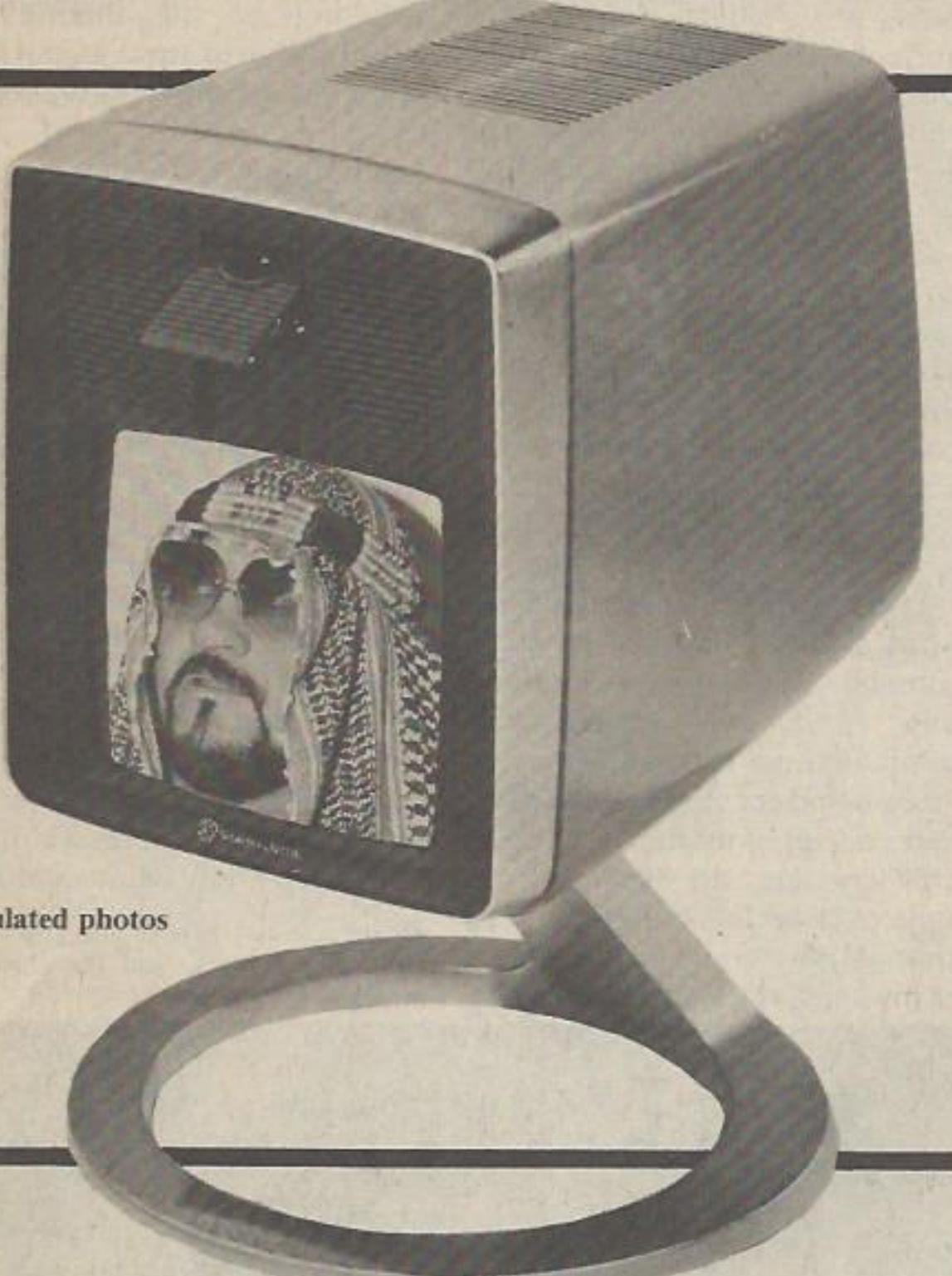
Guts? What do you know of guts? You shiver at the mere

mention of my name and my great wrestlers.

II: (Laughing) I've pulverized your boys. Don't you understand you're all bums?

GM: You still think in infantile concepts.

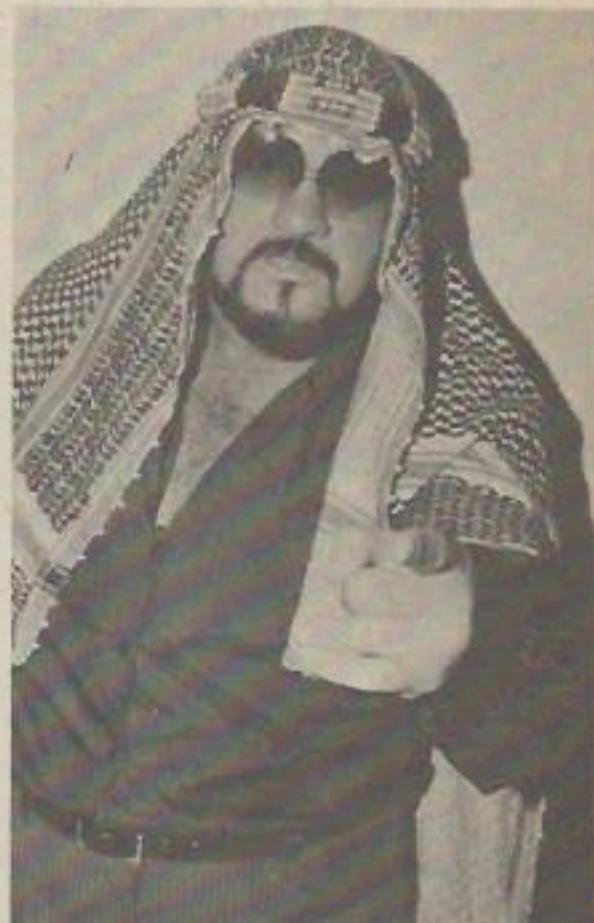
ONE



Simulated photos

II: Cut the garbage, man.
GM: Scoff if you will, it's your demise we're discussing.
II: Not yet.
GM: Ah, so you admit it is inevitable.
II: What are you talking about?
GM: I am saying the day draws near when Mr. Wrestling II and similarly pathetic life-forms will be gone from wrestling.
II: And how's this gonna happen, I need the laugh.

GM: With a minimum of effort.
II: Be specific.
GM: Would you understand?
II: Try me, you're not the only one with brains in wrestling.
GM: Hah, you compare my wit and intellect with yours?
II: Nothing to compare.
GM: Exactly.
II: Gimme a break and speak English.
GM: Can you comprehend such language? I thought primitive peoples like your-



self understand a banging of rocks together and nothing more.

II: I understand how I whipped your wrestlers.
GM: Winning by cheating is not victory.
II: Look who's talking.
GM: Mark Lewin and Abdullah the Butcher never cheat. Our methods are merely misunderstood, that is all.
II: Using foreign objects is just being misunderstood, right?
GM: We have no obligation to respect the laws of moral and intellectual inferiors. I have access to, well, why bother mentioning it?
II: What?
GM: My powers.
II: What powers?
GM: My innate ability commune with spirits and forces

(Continued on page 62)

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DUSTY RHODES

(Continued from Page 31)

anything to tarnish that trust.

"I love my fans and I'd never jeopardize our relationship by acting weird or doin' brawlin'," said Rhodes.

Rhodes fails to appreciate that all men fall from grace at one time or another. No one is perfect, even the American Dream. Yet Rhodes persists in conducting himself according to a standard unattainable by anyone south of Mt. Olympus.

"I ain't like the other wrestlers," said Rhodes. "I don't care what others do. It only concerns me when they get into the ring. When I'm champion, I want to act like a champ and I want all the kids to look up to me and see how a man's supposed to act.

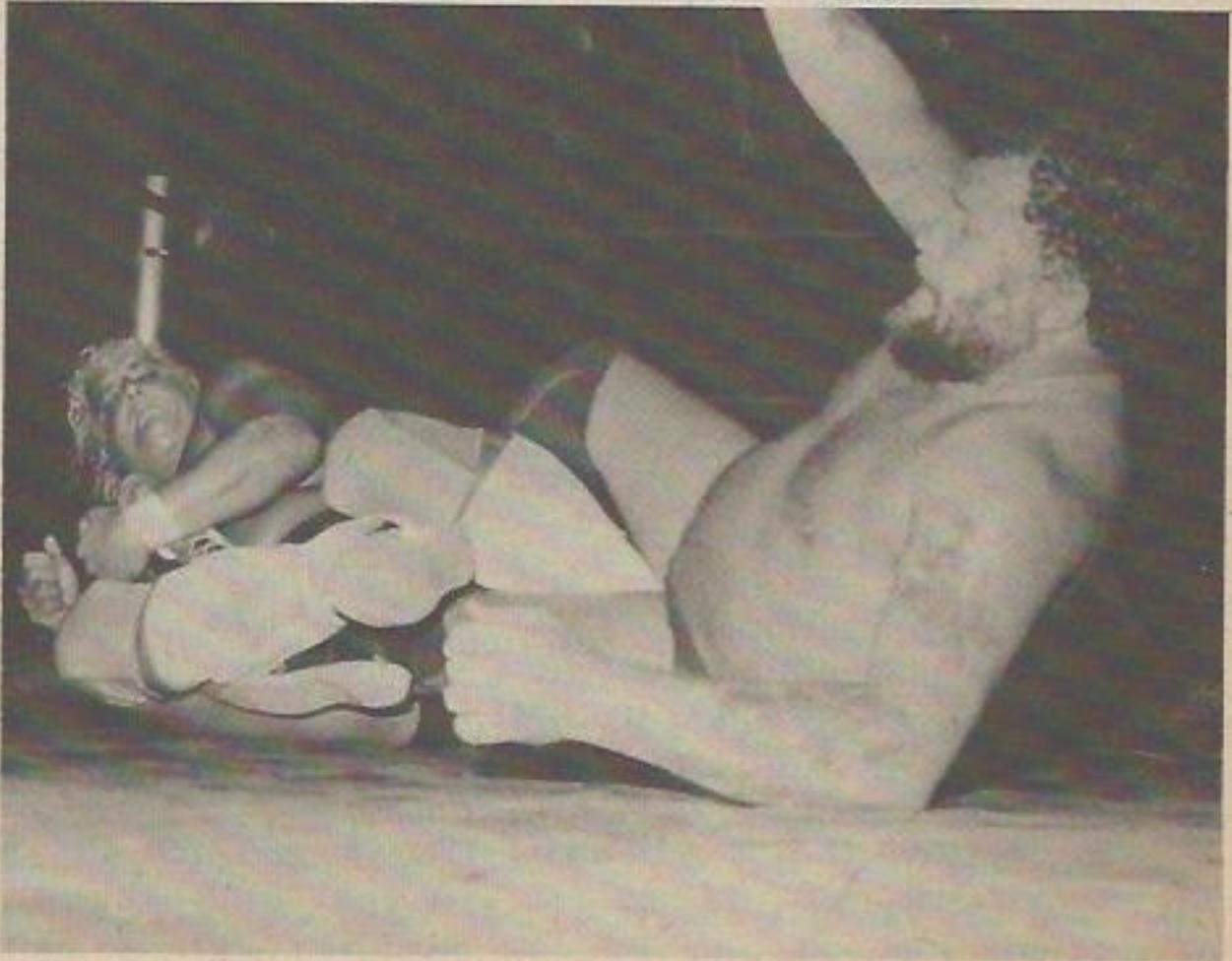
"So I put pressure on myself. That's life, man. I ain't complainin' to anyone. I chose this sport over others like baseball and football 'cause I loved it and accepted all the risks and disappointments. I have only one way to live and one style of wrestlin'. I ain't about to change now and disappoint any of my fans, and I ain't gonna let

anything shame me or the people who love me.

"When I first won the NWA belt from Harley Race, I was on cloud nine. Then it hit me about the awesome responsibility wrapped around my waist. I wouldn't go off shootin' my mouth all over town about how great I was. Hell, I was champion of the world and had commitments, responsibilities, people lookin' up to me and respectin' me 'cause I was champion.

"I hadda wrestle everyone who dared me. A champion doesn't shirk his duties, especially a champion named Dusty Rhodes. That's why I took on Race after that lunatic Terry Funk broke my wrist. Maybe another man mighta begged off, but that don't concern me. It's what Dusty Rhodes shoulda done that mattered and what people mighta thought of me if I'd backed down and asked for the match to be postponed.

"People know what I stand for. Rhodes did not have a firm grip on his figure-four leglock, and the champion managed to escape.



and that I've got the courage to step into situations where none dare venture. I got an image and reputation to maintain and people lovin' me who'll be real hurt if I ever do anything contrary.

"Lookit, I always wanted to be world champion. I think anyone in this sport who denies that's the ultimate goal is a big liar. I want the belt, but not just to parade around with it and show what a big man I am."



Though Rhodes once captured the NWA belt from Race, his reign was short-lived. Race applies a chinlock (above).

"I want the title 'cause I want people to be proud of me and I want them to know I love 'em as much as they love me. I couldn't ever go back into the ring if I ever did somethin' against that thinkin'. If I wrestle or act one small iota below what I should be doin', I might as well kick off the boots and pack it in."

There is little reason to think Rhodes will or could change. He is a vital, passionate, fiercely stubborn man with a firm, powerful self-image reinforced by fan adoration. At this stage of his career, it's unlikely he'd tamper with that self-image. Even if it brings him disaster. □

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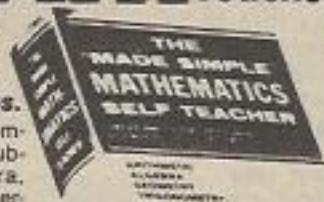


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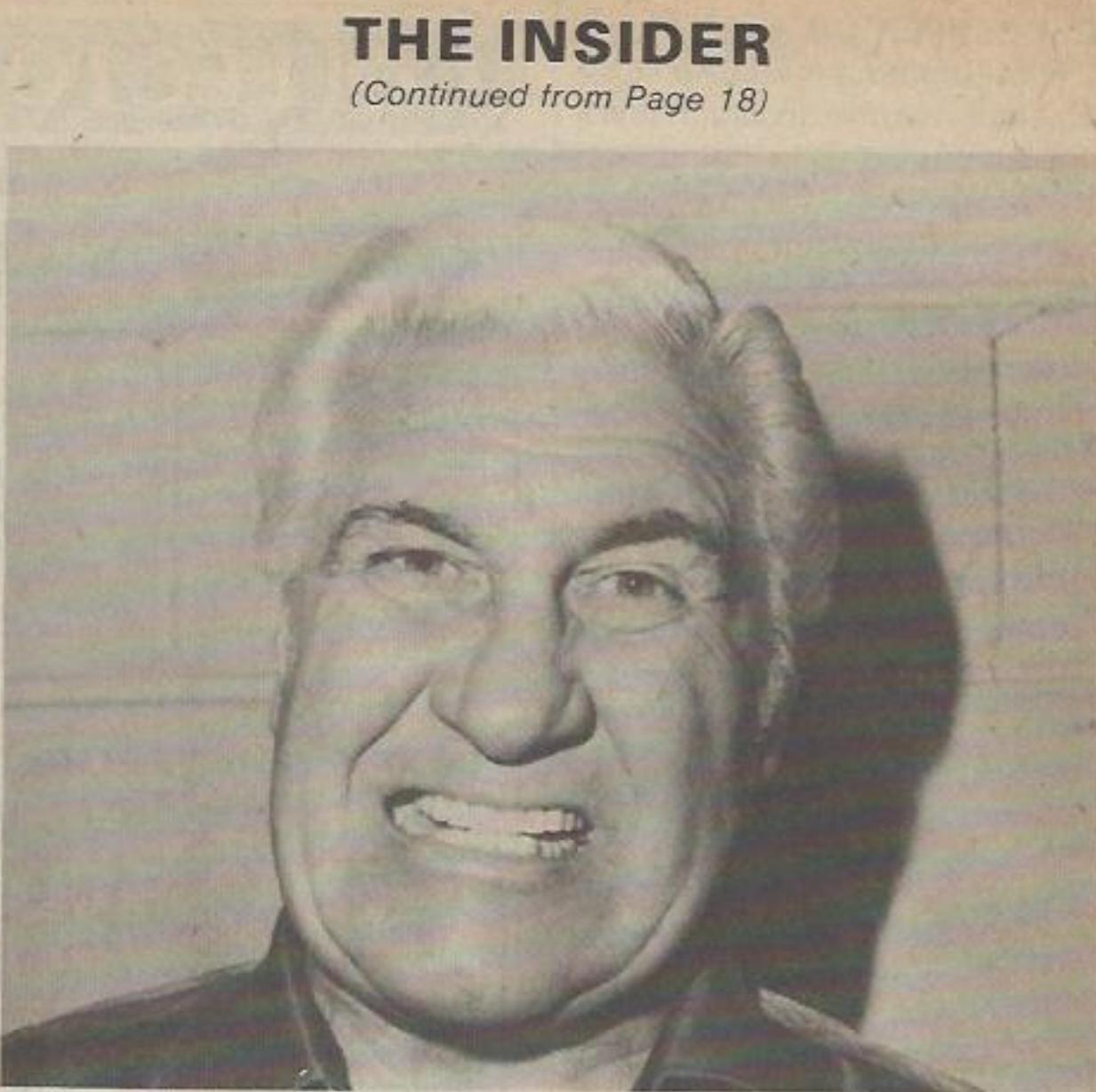
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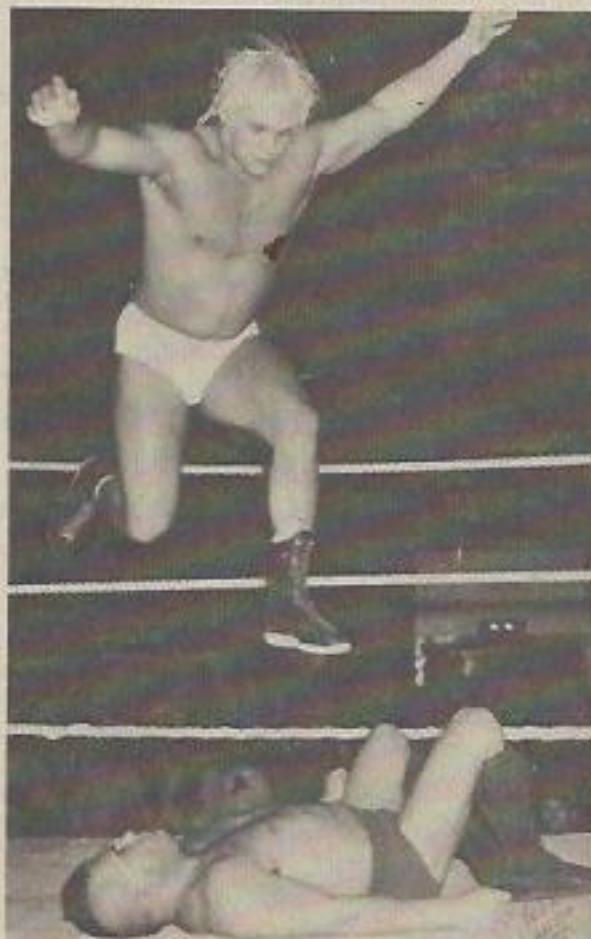
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A grinning Fred Blassie (above) denies there is any truth to the rumor that the Hangman used to sleep with the fishes. Buddy Roberts is not afraid of flying (below) and he is not afraid of being alone.



RUMOR VS. FACT

RUMOR: Buddy Roberts, formerly of the Hollywood Blonds, is petrified of being alone, and once fainted from the sight of his own shadow in a New Orleans hotel room!

FACT: It is true that Roberts prefers tag team competition to individual wrestling, but he is not scared to be alone.

"Fainted from my own shadow?" Roberts laughed. "I was probably shadow-boxing and the shadow knocked me out. That's all."

RUMOR: The Hangman, Fred Blassie's latest discovery who is tearing up the WWF, originates from the depths of the Pacific Ocean and grew up next to sea turtles, starfish, and killer whales.

FACT: "The depths of the ocean? That's ridiculous," answered Blassie. "No living creature could rise from the Pacific Ocean and become a professional wrestler."

So where is the Hangman from, Freddie?

"I can't really say," said Blassie. "If you want, I'll go ask him. He's taking a dip in my fishbowl. Ha ha ha ha ha."

INJURY REPORT

ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER, for no apparent reason, attacked INSIDE WRESTLING photographer and managing editor BILL APTER during a recent match in Atlanta. Ringside observers report that the unpredictable Butcher kicked Apter, punched him to the floor, and broke his camera. "My face turned purple," said Apter. "I'm okay, but I'll never take another picture of that maniac."

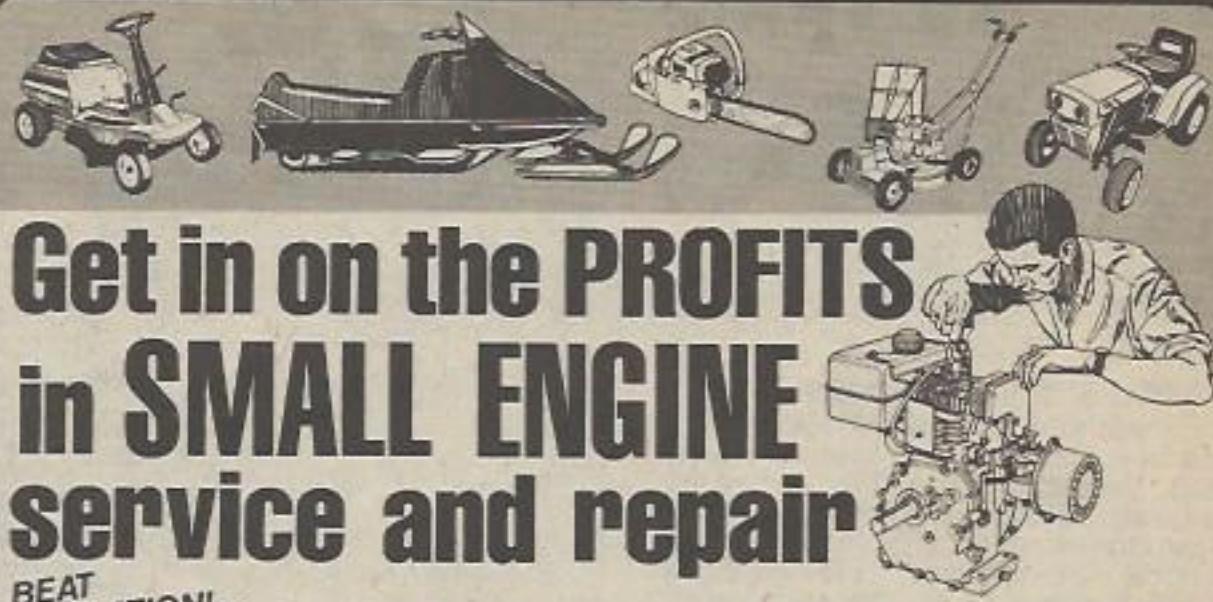


A bloody Abdullah the Butcher is led away from ringside where he attacked INSIDE WRESTLING'S Bill Apter.

Florida TV champion BARRY WINDHAM suffered an injured neck when rulebreaker DON MURACO applied the Asiatic Hammer during a recent match. The Asiatic Hammer is a variation of the deadly piledriver, an illegal maneuver in the state of Florida. The injury will not sideline Windham for too long.

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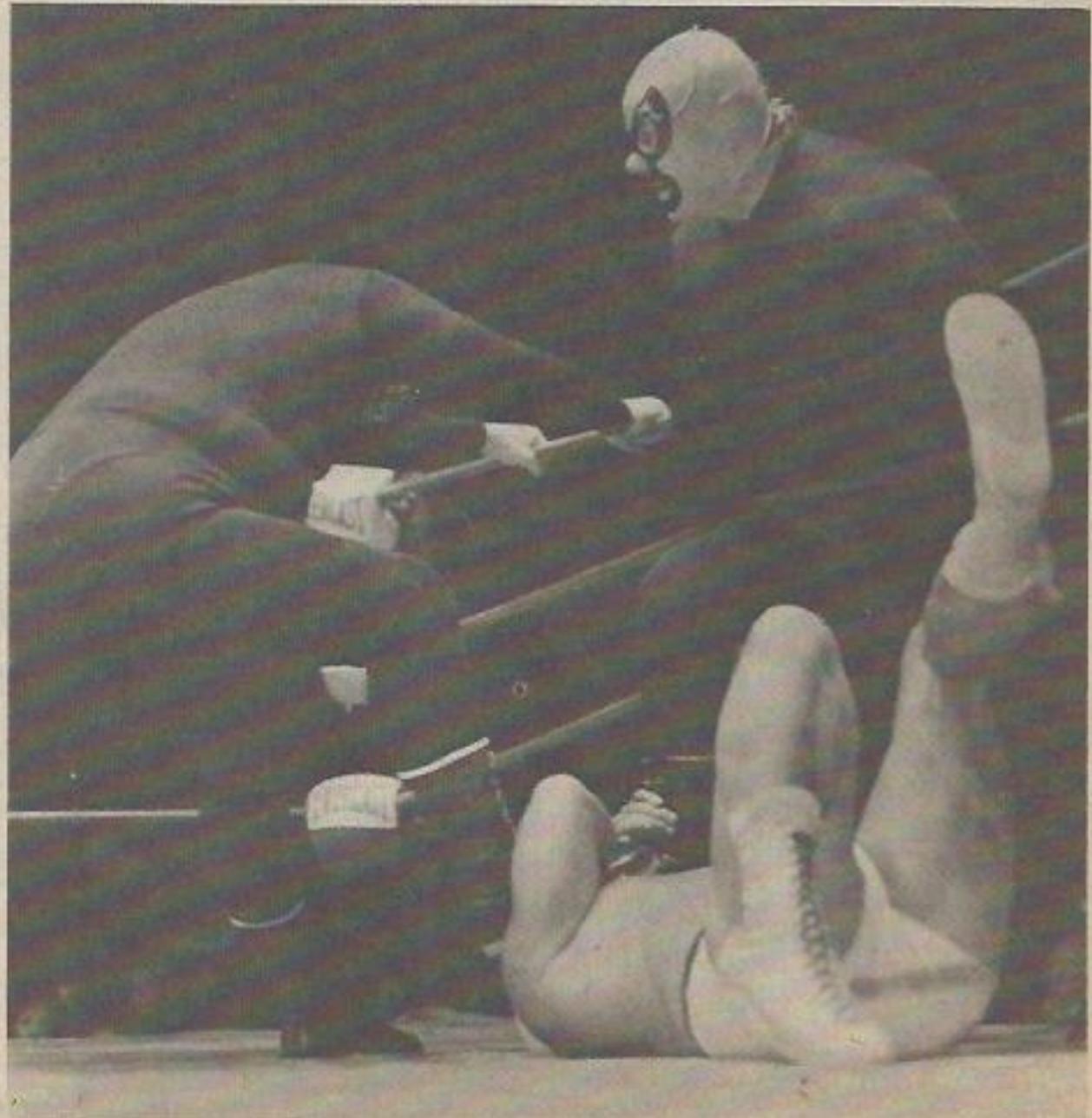
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THE ASSASSINS

(Continued from Page 35)



The Assassins inform Gordon Solie of their plans to annihilate all opposition in Georgia (above). Mr. Wrestling II is helpless against the Assassins' double-teaming effort (below).



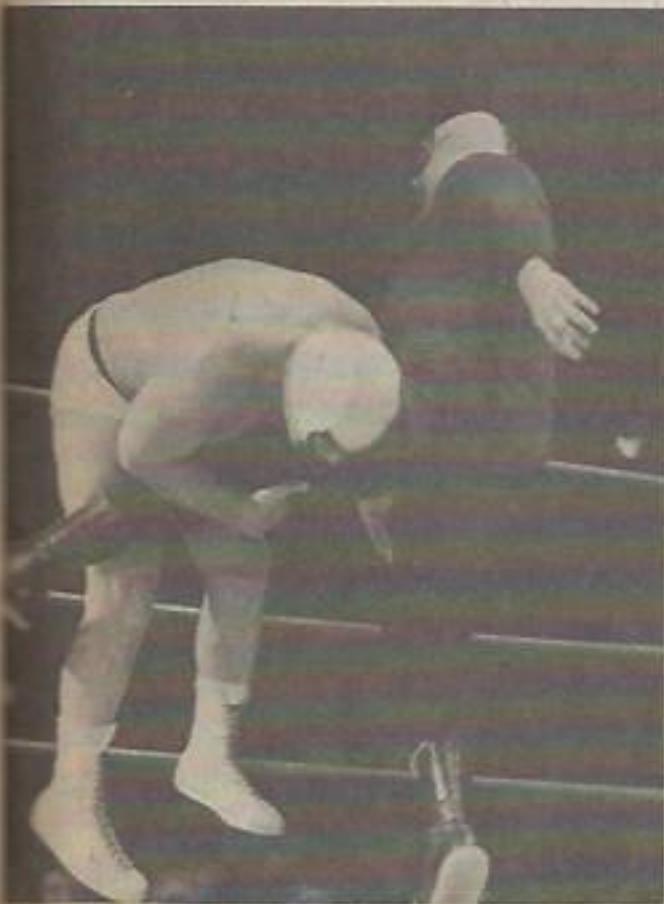
substance of the man's remarks.

2. We could ignore his plea for secrecy and print the entire story.

3. We could blackmail The Assassins.

Saks persuaded us to file the information for later use.

"If we stoop to their level, we're no better than they are," said Saks. "First off, we have to respect the guy's request for anonymity. That's the very basis of journalism. We can't run off and print articles when someone talks to us off the record."



Assassin #2 lifts Wrestling II into the air with a knee to the stomach. The Georgia tag team champions' identity must not be revealed.

"And we couldn't blackmail them. That's not the job of the press. As horrible as The Assassins may be, we can't interfere. All we can do is print the truth. Both sides of the truth when we get it, and let the public make the ultimate decision. If we become a force on one side of the issue, we lose all our credibility. People will wonder if we can ever be objective again. Once you lose your objectivity in journalism, you're finished."

Saks words moved us. The story will stay where it is. □

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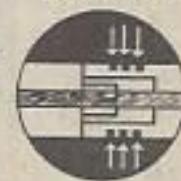
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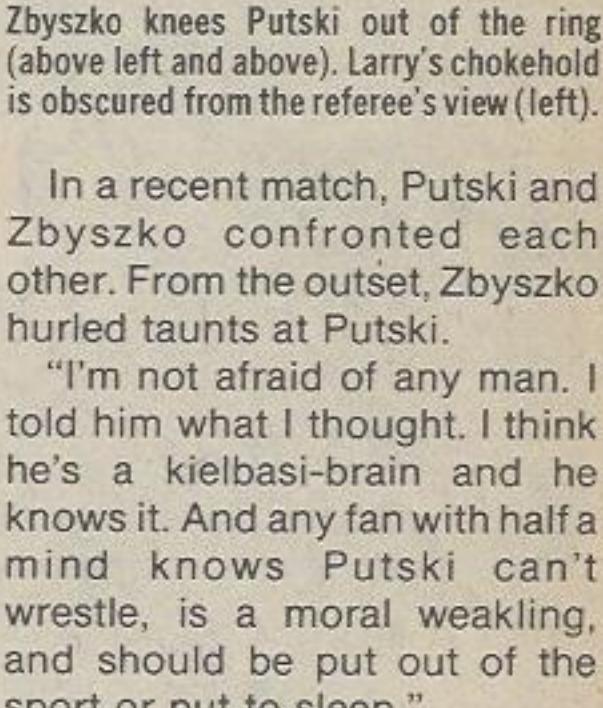
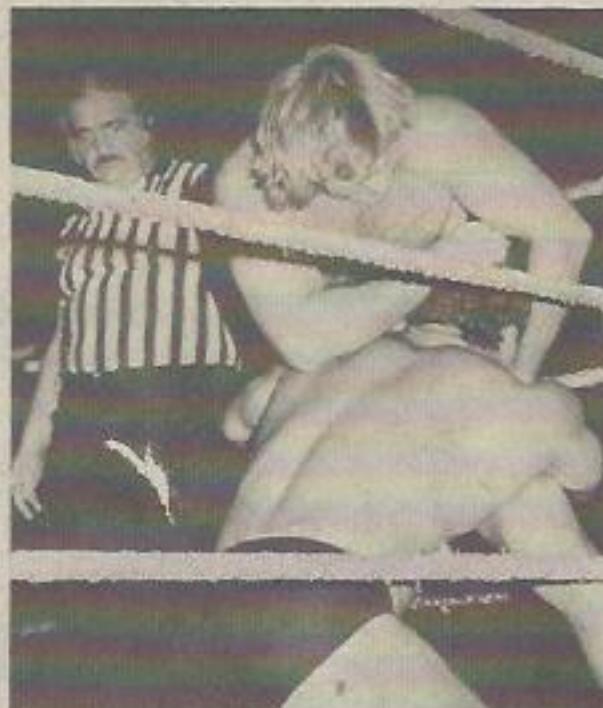
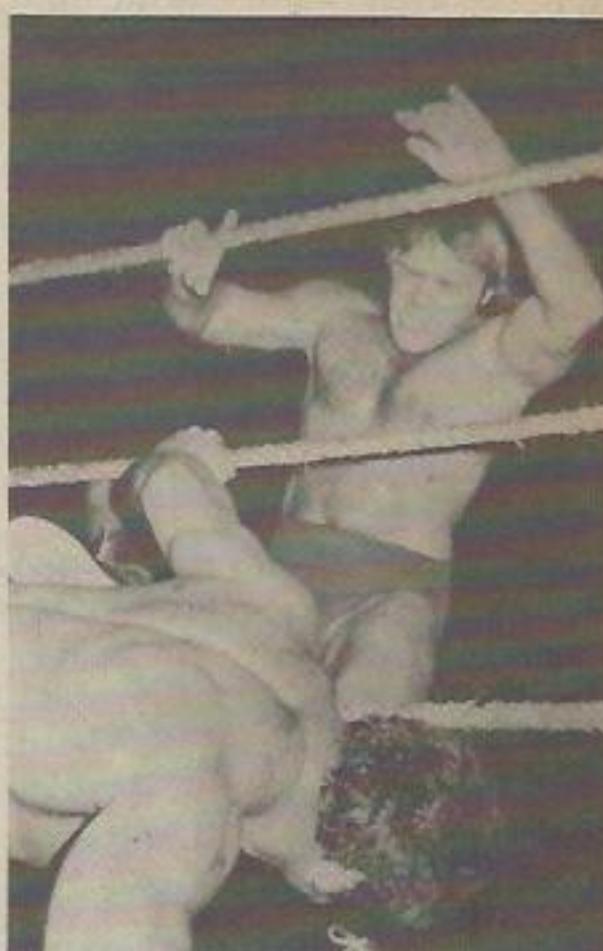
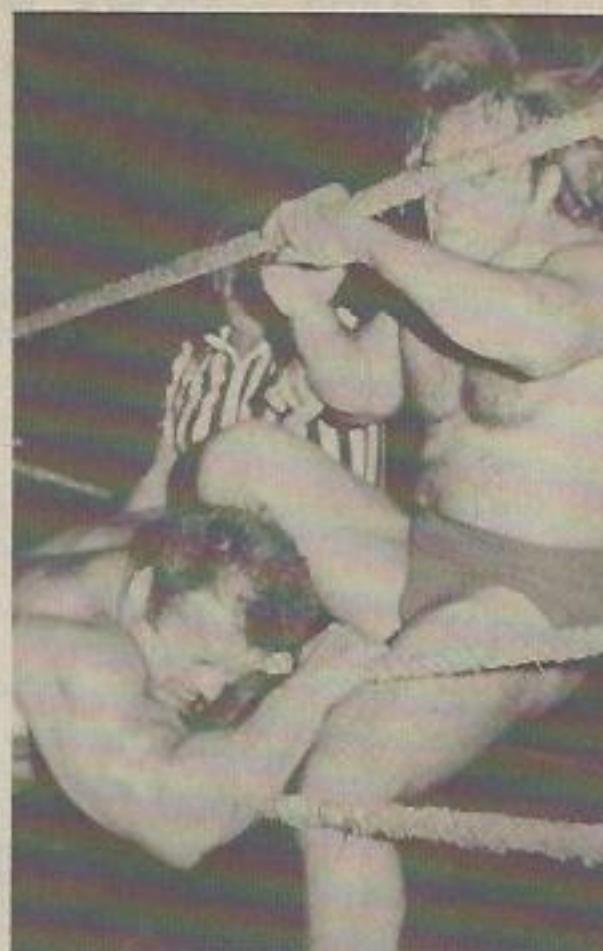
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Zbyszko vs. Putski

(Continued from Page 37)



Zbyszko knees Putski out of the ring (above left and above). Larry's chokehold is obscured from the referee's view (left).

In a recent match, Putski and Zbyszko confronted each other. From the outset, Zbyszko hurled taunts at Putski.

"I'm not afraid of any man. I told him what I thought. I think he's a kielbasi-brain and he knows it. And any fan with half a mind knows Putski can't wrestle, is a moral weakling, and should be put out of the sport or put to sleep."

With his volatile temper, Putski finds it difficult to turn the other cheek when insulted.

"I take that from no man, hear? Even a Zbyszko, who I don't consider a man but a flea. No one insults Ivan Putski. What makes this actually hurt me, pain me a little, because it is a fellow Pole who says such terrible things."

"You can take abuse from anyone, to a degree. But when one of your own blasts off and makes a fool of himself and your people, that is the line you cannot allow. You must fight back."

"Poles have always triumphed through their will and their greatness," said Zbyszko. "A real Polish star doesn't need whimpering nitwits to aid him in his course of action. You think I really need people who won't take the time to understand me? Why should I? If someone won't bother understanding why I am the way I am, why should I give them the benefit of my wisdom or attention?"

"No, someone like Ivan Putski fails as a Pole, as a wrestler, and as a human being. If General Pulaski were alive today, he'd be turning over in his grave."

"I do not fight Zbyszko merely because I hate what he did to Bruno Sammartino and his fans. I hate him because he shames my people. Others think all Poles act that way. It is not true. Only by defending my people's honor and by smashing Zbyszko and eventually driving him from wrestling can I ever restore the dignity my people deserve."

Zbyszko simply chuckles.



Standing between the ropes, Ivan traps Larry in a bearhug. The ref quickly made him release the hold.

"Putski is the disgrace. Do Poles like cowards? No, I don't. Putski runs from a fair fight and enlists allies, cheap, disgusting men like Pat Patterson, to do his dirty work. I'm not afraid of Putski. I am proud to be Polish, and Putski's the one disgracing our people."

In the end, fans must make the decision and select the man they feel best represents Polish wrestling. Is it Ivan Putski, defender of his Polish Power? Or Larry Zbyszko, much-maligned and misunderstood? □

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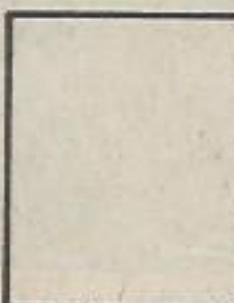
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BEHIND THE DOOR

(Continued from Page 8)

words (clearly audible) to his manager. "Just get me the hell out of this place. I'm not ready to wrestle and I want to go home."

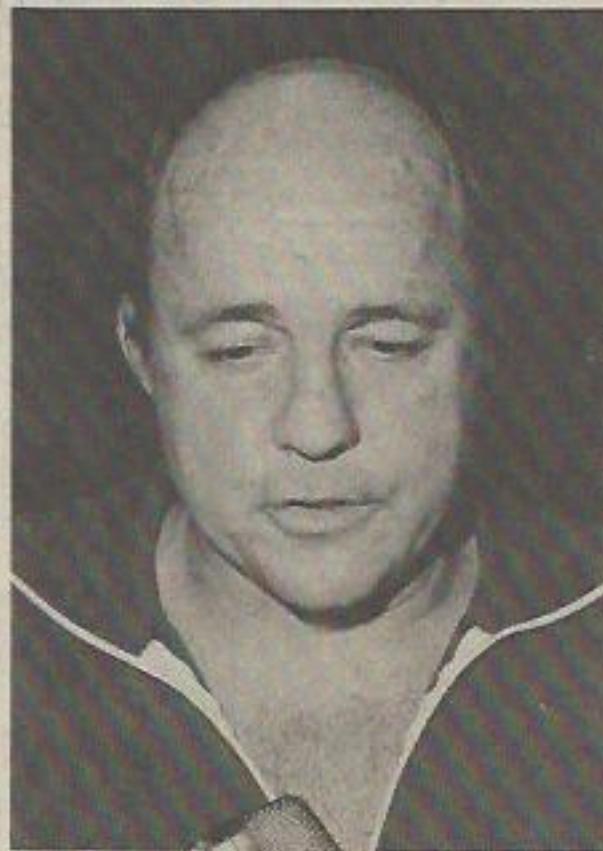
Of course, it was far too late to back out of the match. All he could do at that point was go into the ring and do his best. But it is inconceivable to me that a champion can go into a match with such a negative attitude and have any hope of retaining his title. Especially against one of the greatest wrestlers ever to step into a ring.

because I was going to be better. I was really up for the match. Since he defeated me for the title in 1975, he's done nothing but disgrace the championship and the sport of professional wrestling. Too many times I've seen him win matches by using foul tactics. Too many times have I seen him purposely get disqualified so he could hold onto the belt."

Strangely, Bockwinkel did not use his self-disqualification tactic to keep the belt. Maybe he was too battered to even think straight. Gagne controlled three-quarters of the match. Five times, he threw the dazed Bockwinkel onto the Comiskey infield. At 22:06 Gagne clamped on his famed sleeperhold to capture the title.

It took the sleeper to wake Bockwinkel to the reality of the situation. When he recovered fully in the dressing room and clearly saw that the belt was not by his side, he snapped out of his day-long depression and, through Heenan, filed an official protest with the AWA. "No man alive can apply the sleeperhold on Nick Bockwinkel," Heenan told a gathering of reporters. "The man is the finest defensive wrestler in the world and knows at least 10 escapes for a legal sleeperhold. No, gentlemen and ladies, that was a chokehold, the same chokehold that has brought Gagne his greatness, the same chokehold he's been getting away with for years. Did you see my man spit up blood when he was going under? I can get you a hundred doctors to swear that it was a choke."

It was Bockwinkel who really choked. The belt belongs to Verne Gagne. □



Verne Gagne talks to the press moments after regaining the AWA championship from Nick Bockwinkel.

Verne Gagne has been in more title matches than any other wrestler in the history of the AWA. He knows when a man is not at his normal level, and he knows how to take advantage of it.

"It was clearly evident to me that something was troubling Bockwinkel," Gagne said. "I knew it from the moment he walked into the ring. But on this night, I don't think it would have made a difference if Bockwinkel was wrestling at his best or not

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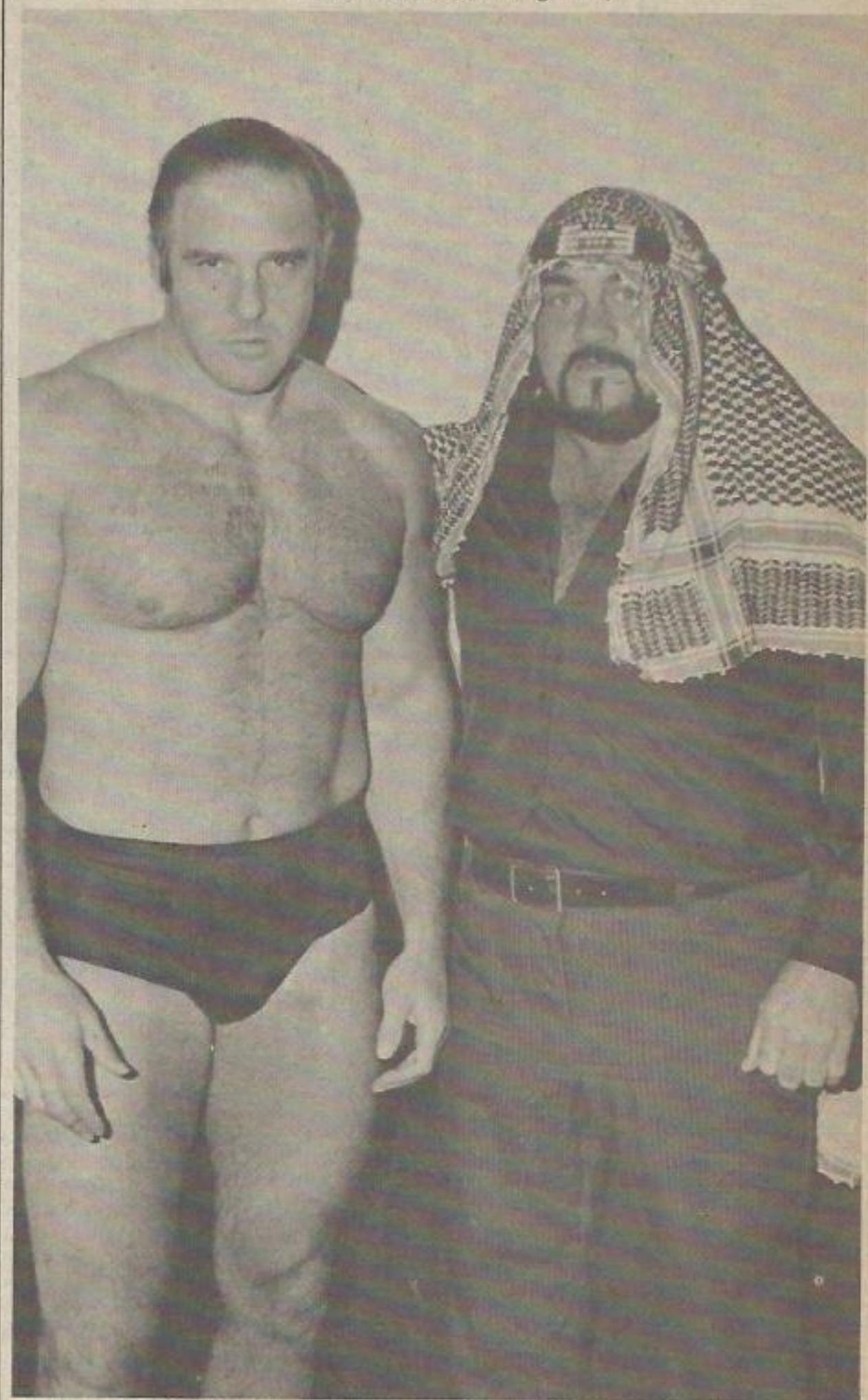
beyond your limited, barbaric capability.

II: What garbage.

GM: I expect such comments. You couldn't recognize true wrestling genius since all you're capable of are the

ONE ON ONE

(Continued from Page 47)



same idiotic brutal tactics your peers demonstrate.

II: I'm brutal?

GM: Absolutely.

II: You're a nut, pal.

GM: They've scoffed at other greats. Look at the hostility Christopher Columbus encountered when he said the world was round.

II: You're comparing yourself to Columbus?

GM: Somewhat. I intend on changing the world in much greater detail than Columbus or Da Vinci.

II: Like?

GM: Blazing a path for the new era, an age of total freedom, an era in which inferior humans all have their consciousnesses raised and see the true path and light I've witnessed. Once the morons get over their simplistic human values of right and wrong they'll accept me as the true savior of all wrestling and aid me in banishing retardates like yourself and Tommy Rich. Not that we require too much aid.



Mr. Wrestling II pummels Abdullah the Butcher. II vows to stop Great Mephisto and his men from taking over the sport.

II: You're outta your mind, pal.

GM: Your ignorance only aids my course. I didn't think you'd understand.

II: I understand you and Lewin and Abdullah are sick, sick men, and I won't let you take over wrestling. Only way you'll do that is over my dead body, buddy.

GM: That can be easily arranged. □

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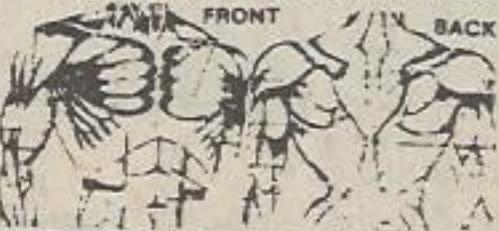
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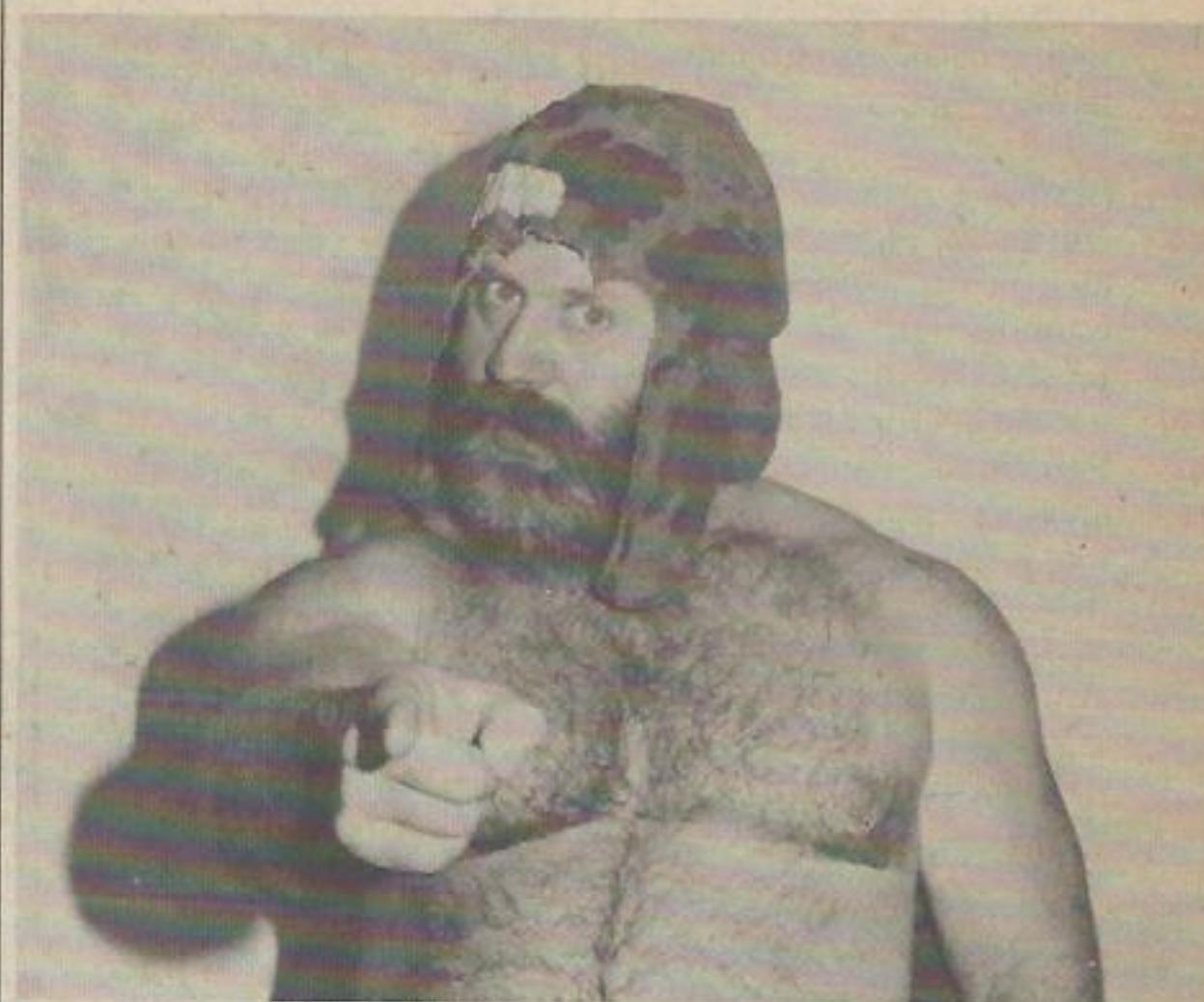
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ON THE ROAD

(Continued from Page 10)



"Uh-huh."

"And I want you to listen to what I have to say."

"Go ahead."

"You writers only care what fans say and think, assuming they can do either," said Humperdink. "You worry about the way things are done instead of the ultimate result. You want all wrestlers to be the same, polite, nice, stupid with dumb smiles and moronic words. Look at the people the fans like and you guys cover, creeps like Dusty Rhodes and Jerry Brisco and Manny Fernandez. Bums. They ever amount to anything? Rhodes can't win a title and when he does, he loses it back in a few days. Brisco's livin' on his brother's rep and Fernandez is a smart-ass with the brains of a goat."

"But do you guys ever touch that? Nooo, all you want is quiet stuff, no controversy. You should look at who's successful, who wins the titles and the matches, who makes the big bucks, buster, the really big dollars and drives around in the big cars and wears great clothes."

While Bugsy McGraw was held hostage, a man posing as Bugsy went to Morgy's apartment and lured him to the hideout. Both McGraw and Morgenstein were released unharmed.

"That never crosses your mind. All you want are mindless puppets who never open their big stupid mouths. Your priorities are all bent out of shape, you don't look at the important things. We are successful. We have molded the greatest force of power ever assembled, an army of invincible warriors united with the strength and purpose to crush all opposition and bring a new era to Florida, an age of power, an age where men like Mr. Florida will not embarrass this great sport."

"That is our message. I knew there'd be no other way to transmit it unless I lured you here. But I want all those smart fans out there to join us, to see the light, to feel our power. Or be crushed."

Both Bugsy and I were subdued as we left the warehouse and hitched back to town. He muttered Humperdink would be stopped. Suddenly I wasn't so sure. □

BODYSLAMS & PINFALLS

(Continued from Page 12)

vile act of cowardice. There is no room in professional sports for this kind of thug mentality.

Far worse is the fans' approval of this. The fans at the television taping couldn't be happier with the bat-wielding goons. The applause would have made a maggot gag. I've always known most wrestling fans are stupid, but now they're dangerously stupid.

Unhappily, we've only seen the beginning. Wrestling's punks, men like Sullivan and Hansen, will continue to bring deadly

weapons into the ring. They'll ignore the fact that baseball bats can crack a skull with horrible ease. Instead, they'll pretend this is how men behave. Cowards often try to mask their fears as courage.

When will these idiots be happy? Will we see rifles brought into the ring when a tag team knows they can't defeat their foes? Will the fans continue to applaud when their "heroes" are being sentenced for murder?

To stop this trend in its tracks, I asked the

Assassins to file a complaint against Sullivan and Hansen. Have them put in jail where they belong! Instead, the Assassins bravely said they will take out their complaints in a match.

The Assassins are wrong. This is bigger than a feud. The fan favorites have to be put down and put down hard.

Sullivan and Hansen lost the moment they brought the bats to the interview. I hope they haven't made losers of us all. □

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